



Updated Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions concerning pre-registration nursing, midwifery, allied health profession and healthcare science students – a guide for students, practice supervisors, educators, and assessors (Jan 2021)

This guide has been collated from student queries to Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), Chief Nursing Office Wales, Welsh Universities, Health Boards, Royal Colleges and other key stakeholders.

Click on the following headings to find the type of questions you are looking for:

A: Key messages	2
B: National policy and procedures	6
C: Student supervision and assessment	9
D: University/ Placement Provider processes .	17

A: Key messages

1. **What assurances are there to alleviate students' anxieties about entry into practice placements?**

All nursing, midwifery, allied health profession, healthcare science, medical and physician associate students are making a significant contribution to service delivery through their ongoing commitment to academic and practice learning.

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), Welsh Government, Universities, Placement Providers and key stakeholders, continue to implement the contingencies necessary for students to progress their journey on healthcare programmes.

HEIW has issued a 'Healthcare Student **PACT**' directed towards students which outlines several pledges by organisations involved in supporting students' safe entry into practice learning environments, given the ongoing impact of Covid-19.

The document draws together several student support elements designed to help alleviate concerns about practice learning at this time and underlines an organisational commitment to sustainable, high quality healthcare student education.

See the 'Healthcare Student **PACT' here:**

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/all-wales-healthcare-student-pact/>

HEIW/ Welsh Government have also issued a position statement which confirms all healthcare students as having continued key worker status when undertaking practice placements as part of their programme of learning.

See the Welsh Government/ HEIW Position statement on Student key worker status here: <https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-position-statement-v2/>

Universities, Placement Providers, and all key stakeholders have revised arrangements in place to enable students (subject to individual risk assessment), to continue placement learning opportunities and work towards the timely completion of programme requirements notwithstanding the continuing impact of pandemic conditions. The All Wales Covid-19 risk assessment enables you to consider your personal risk factors.

See the All Wales Covid-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool here: <https://gov.wales/checkyourrisk>

2. What support is available in relation to students' health and wellbeing?

A range of national and local resources are available for healthcare students through their local university information sites. Health Education and Improvement Wales have also developed health and well-being resources available for all staff: <https://heiw.nhs.wales/covid-19/health-and-wellbeing-resources/>

Welsh Government have worked with NHS Wales employers and trade unions to make available a multi-layered wellbeing offer for health and social care workers in Wales, including a confidential Samaritans helpline and a number of free to access health and wellbeing support apps - *Unmind*, *Sleepio* and *Daylight*, *Headspace*: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2020/03/free-access-to-wellbeing-apps-for-all-nhs-staff> and *SilverCloud*: <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/silvercloud/>

Health for Health Professionals Wales (HHP Wales) has also been expanded and is available for healthcare student access. HHP Wales is a confidential and free, tiered model of psychological and mental health support available to everyone working in the NHS in Wales. HHP Wales aims to provide support to those who may be feeling overwhelmed and distressed or having difficulties managing personal and professional challenges because of the pandemic. The service operates between 9:00 to 17:00 on weekdays and can be accessed via a self-referral form on the website: <https://www.hhpwales.co.uk/> email: HHPCOVID@cf.ac.uk or phone 0800 058 2738.

3. What is contained in the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) emergency and recovery standards published on 14.01.21.?

The NMC has reintroduced *Current emergency and recovery standards (14.01.21.)*: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/emergency-education-standards/>

These standards are in response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation and are available for use in each of the four UK countries including the option for first year nursing and midwifery students to focus on academic and online learning rather than participating in clinical placements, for final year nursing students to opt in and deploy to undertake paid clinical placements, and exceptionally, for the same person may fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor.

However, the NMC emergency standards are not mandatory and the decision of whether to implement the emergency standards rests with key education stakeholders and their practice partners within the four countries of the UK.

	<p>Each of the UK countries can decide whether they wish to adopt the emergency standards at this time given local need.</p> <p><u>In Wales, following key stakeholder engagement, the emergency standards in relation to third year nursing student deployment will not currently be introduced</u> as detailed in a HEIW and Welsh Government statement (15.01.21.):</p> <p><i>“We are extremely grateful to the nursing students who were able to be deployed during wave one of the pandemic last year. The changes to the nurse education standards being introduced by the Nursing and Midwifery Council are optional. In Wales, the situation for student nurses is not the same as in England and so we have no current plans to ask our third-year nursing students to be deployed in the coming weeks. But we will be keeping the situation under review.”</i></p> <p>First year nursing and midwifery students will continue to undertake practice placements.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Why are the NMC emergency standards not being introduced in Wales at this time?</p> <p>Whilst there are severe challenges to health and care services due to ongoing pandemic conditions, there has been confirmation from Service and Workforce leads in Wales (Jan 2021) that student deployment is not required at this point.</p> <p>HEIW, Welsh Government, Universities, Service and Workforce leads, have highlighted the importance of doing everything possible to continue to support students during practice placements, manage the contingencies necessary to alleviate pressures on placement capacity, support supernumerary status and protected learning time, and provide effective practice learning experiences.</p> <p>Students have experienced disruption to their programmes during the first phase of the pandemic and the decision not to implement NMC emergency standards at this time is also in recognition of the importance of students continuing on their programmes in a timely manner, so they are able to have the opportunity to register without undue delay, ensuring significant numbers of registrants are available to enter the workforce.</p> <p>The decision not to implement the NMC emergency standards currently, other than allowing the same person to fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor for the period that this emergency standard is in place, will be kept under continuous review. There will be continuing collaboration between Welsh Government, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW,) Health and Social Care partners, Universities and professional bodies, with Workforce Directors monitoring the latest Covid-19 data and the impact on service delivery.</p>

5. What are the current professional regulatory standards for allied health profession, and healthcare science student education in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic?

The Health & Care Professions Council are not planning to reintroduce emergency standards currently. HCPC have been working together with universities, professional bodies, NHS organisations and regulators to ensure that as many people with the right skills and knowledge as possible can contribute to the Covid-19 emergency and also enable students to complete their studies with minimal disruption.

HCPC will continue to fulfil their statutory duty to protect the public whilst taking account of current Government and public health guidance, ensure the health of employees, and provide flexibility and support to registrants who will be working in ever more demanding circumstances.

HCPC have issued a statement for students that during the current period:

“We recognise that students are keen to continue their development as health and care professionals and want to understand more about the role you can play supporting the health service during this difficult time. However, we feel your education and training is vital for a strong healthcare workforce in the long term, and while our student temporary register was necessary at earlier stages of the pandemic, we feel that this is now of greater importance.”

See Covid-19 related information for Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) ‘Applying our standards:’ <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/>

[HCPC statement on student supervision | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/)

The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS), the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM) and the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) have established a Shared Temporary Register (STR) for healthcare science practitioners which is open to final year healthcare science students who meet required criteria to practice as registered professionals within the healthcare science workforce.

See further information - Academy for Healthcare Science: <https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/education-training/>

B: National policy and procedures

6. What is the Welsh Government public health response to Covid-19 related harm and people in Wales?

The Welsh Government response to Covid-19 continues to require four strands of work including improved surveillance, effective case identification and contact tracing, learning from international experience and engaging with the public.

Covid-19 related-harm to the people of Wales can occur through direct harm to individuals from infection and complications; services becoming overwhelmed due to sudden Covid-19 spikes in demand; individuals not seeking medical attention early, or changes in NHS service delivery meaning a pause on non-essential activity; socioeconomic harms such as individuals not being able to work, financial impacts on businesses, and psychological harms to the public of social distancing.

See the Welsh Government document ‘Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: A framework for recovery’ here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-04/leading-wales-out-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic.pdf>

7. What is the Health Education and Improvement Wales/ Welsh Government position (October 2020) in relation to Covid-19 and healthcare students?

Key bodies in Wales continue to work to support nursing, midwifery, healthcare science and allied health professional students’ revised programme arrangements during the Covid-19 period.

These organisations have included Universities and Health Boards/independent sector organisations in Wales, Wales Chief Nursing Office, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, Council of Deans of Health Wales, Royal Colleges and Trades Unions.

Pandemic conditions continue to impact on health and care services with implications for health profession education programmes as organisations look to support students into an extended placement recovery phase.

A range of key documents and resources for students, trainers, educators and employers are available here: <https://heiw.nhs.wales/covid-19/>

<p>8.</p>	<p>How will students’ supernumerary status and protected learning time in placements be assured?</p> <p>HEIW has developed a set of Covid-19 Placement Recovery Principles agreed by key stakeholder organisations in Wales to support nursing, midwifery, healthcare science and allied health professional students’ safe return to Covid-19 impacted placement arrangements (Sept 2020).</p> <p>The principles provide all Wales quality benchmark measures for Placement Providers, Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) and key bodies in relation to placement learning in Covid-19 adapted circumstances.</p> <p>The principles also take account of NMC <i>emergency and recovery programme standards</i> (2021) and HCPC <i>Covid-19 applying our standards</i> (2020).</p> <p>Access the Covid-19 Placement Recovery Principles document here: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/all-wales-covid-19-placement-recovery-principles/</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Are healthcare students classed as essential key workers?</p> <p>Yes. HEIW/ Welsh Government have issued a position statement which confirms medical, nursing, midwifery, allied health profession and healthcare science students as having continued key worker status when undertaking practice placements as part of their programme of learning.</p> <p>See the Welsh Government/ HEIW Position statement on Student key worker status here: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-position-statement-v2/</p> <p>Welsh Government/ HEIW recognise that as key workers, students may also be required to cross localised lockdown boundaries to continue their placement experience. A ‘reasonable excuse’ to enter or leave a Covid-19 restricted boundary includes “travel for work or education” (<i>Covid-19 update 16.09.20. Welsh Minister for Health and Social Services</i>).</p> <p>As core contributors to healthcare delivery, key worker status also means <u>students must be included in organisational test and trace processes.</u></p> <p>Wherever possible, Universities and Placement Providers will work to support students’ continuation of their allocated placement. In doing so, students must adhere to all safety guidance from a national and local organisational perspective. Students can access a letter confirming key worker status downloaded from their University student site.</p>

10.	<p>What indemnity arrangements are in place for healthcare students working in practice settings?</p> <p>Indemnity arrangements are in place for healthcare students undertaking practice placements, through state indemnity schemes operated by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership Legal & Risk Services on behalf of the Welsh Government.</p> <p>The Welsh Risk Pool is part of the NHS Shared Service Partnership Legal and Risk service. It provides the means by which all Health Authorities and Trusts in Wales are able to indemnify against risk.</p> <p>Welsh Government has confirmed that students on supernumerary placements are covered by the Life Assurance scheme, which will remain open until 25.03.22: https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-and-social-care-coronavirus-life-assurance-scheme-2020-wales</p>
11.	<p>Childcare issues may be a concern if on placement. Will there be any assistance with these students to find open schools and nurseries as key workers?</p> <p>Yes. Welsh Government/ HEIW have confirmed that healthcare students will continue to retain key worker status whilst undertaking practice placements and can access necessary documentation to substantiate this. If a student has a school age child, they will be provided with a letter that they can provide to their child's school, certifying 'key worker' status.</p> <p>https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-position-statement/</p>
12.	<p>What other useful resources are available?</p> <p>Council of Deans for Health: https://councilofdeans.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-healthcare-students/</p> <p>HCPC Covid-19 advice: https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/</p> <p>Nursing and Midwifery Council Coronavirus (Covid-19): Information and advice: https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions/</p> <p>NHS Employers - Healthcare science education and training: https://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/plan/workforce-supply/education-and-training/healthcare-science-education-and-training</p> <p>Royal College of Nursing frequently asked questions: https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/covid-19</p> <p>Royal College of Midwives frequently asked questions: https://www.rcm.org.uk/coronavirus-qa/</p>

C: Student supervision and assessment

<p>13.</p>	<p>Will healthcare students continue to undertake practice placements during further phases of the pandemic?</p> <p>Yes. All students will continue their programme of learning as student nurses, student midwives, allied health profession or healthcare science students during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>HEIW, Universities and Placement Providers in Wales continue to implement the contingencies necessary to ensure students’ have opportunities to achieve their practice learning outcomes and that appropriate supervision and assessment, supernumerary status and protected learning time continues to be provided.</p> <p>Following the issue of NMC emergency and recovery standards (14.01.21.), and consultation across key organisations in Wales, at the current time there will not be any changes to the way nursing and midwifery students’ theoretical and practice learning is organised other than the same person fulfilling the role of practice supervisor and assessor. Students’ practice learning will continue as planned. The priority is the timely registration of final year students.</p> <p>This position will be kept under continuous review.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Will students be deployed to placements under student employment contracts?</p> <p>No. <u>In Wales</u>, healthcare students will continue to undertake placement learning in line with their programme requirements. Students will not be deployed under contract at the present time. <i>(Please refer back to Question 3 and 4 for confirmation of this detail).</i></p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>How will practice staff be assured that students have completed relevant induction material prior to placements?</p> <p>Healthcare students will share a ‘Safe-return Student Passport’ with Practice Supervisors/ Practice Assessors/ Practice Educators or equivalent role, when they commence their allocated placement which details key induction content: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-placement-recovery-student-passport-form/</p> <p>The passport gives assurance students have completed an individual risk assessment and that there has been consideration of the appropriateness of their placement allocation. The passport also contains an orientation to the placement environment which is to be completed within the first week of a student’s allocation.</p>

16. How will healthcare students be supervised whilst on placement?

Nursing and Midwifery Council regulations: With the introduction of the Nursing and Midwifery Council *Emergency Standards* at the start of the pandemic, there was a requirement to introduce new *Standards for student supervision and assessment* (NMC 2018) across nursing and midwifery programmes more immediately.

The NMC do not expect institutions to return to the predecessor standards that were in place to support learning an assessment in practice (SLAiP 2008).

Universities and placement providers will instead continue to use the new student supervision and assessment arrangements (NMC 2018).

This means nursing and midwifery students will be supported by Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors. Placement teams, Practice Education Facilitators, Education Liaison Nurses, Practice Educators, Academic Assessors and University staff will also provide a network of support for students during placement learning.

Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) guidance: HCPC information aims to support registrants in understanding how to apply Standards of conduct, performance and ethics during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/>

Guidance includes meeting HCPC standards in a challenging environment and advice for those providing effective supervision or delegating work: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/supervision-and-delegation/>

Covid-19 Joint Shared Temporary Register for Healthcare Science Practitioners: In keeping with developments in the statutory regulation of healthcare professions the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS), the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM) and the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) have been working together to establish a Shared Temporary Register (STR) for healthcare science practitioners.

The Shared Temporary Register is open to final year healthcare science students across the four home countries that meet required criteria that allows them to practice as registered professionals within the healthcare science workforce: <https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/education-training/>

<p>17.</p>	<p>What if the variety of placement learning experiences is limited because of the impact of Covid-19 on redesignation of healthcare services?</p> <p>HEIW, Universities and Placement Providers are working to ensure students continue to have access to the broadest range of placements possible.</p> <p>If there are concerns about limited learning opportunities for students within an allocated placement, this should be discussed with the placement team lead.</p> <p>The Covid-19 period has meant an unprecedented change to the delivery of healthcare services, but new ways of working have also resulted in unique practice learning opportunities which students are able to benefit from and contribute to at this time.</p> <p>Placement teams will look to tailor assessment strategies to ensure appropriate use of reflective discussion, student questioning, simulation of care activities and student demonstration of essential skills when assessing practice learning outcomes.</p> <p>If further support is required, students should contact their local Practice Educator Facilitator/ Education Liaison Nurse/ Practice Educator or equivalent role and/or University link. Students should also contact their University Academic Assessor/ Programme Lead for advice.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>Will students’ practice assessment documentation remain the same under revised programme arrangements?</p> <p>Yes. Students will continue to record evidence towards achievement of practice learning outcomes using their relevant programme documentation. Additional practice learning records can also be used to capture students’ supplementary learning experiences.</p> <p>Given ongoing pandemic conditions, practice learning outcomes may not be able to be physically recorded and confirmed in the usual way.</p> <p>Practice supervisors and assessors, practice educators or equivalent roles may need to consider completing student documentation at an agreed point towards the end of a student placement.</p> <p>Students will also need to be active participants in their own learning, taking advantage of learning opportunities that arise and be especially mindful to take responsibility to record evidence towards achievement of practice learning outcomes during the Covid-19 period.</p>

19.	<p>Is there any change to the skills and procedures students are expected to achieve during the Covid-19 period?</p> <p>No. Programme requirements determine the skills and procedures students are expected to demonstrate by the end of their programme safely and effectively. Programme requirements remain the same during the period of the pandemic.</p> <p>There is no expectation that students will be required to work beyond the limits of competence/proficiency as set out in their programme documentation. Registered professionals remain accountable for all aspects of their individual practice, including what they choose to delegate to students:</p> <p>All Wales Guidelines for delegation: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/delegation-guidelines/</p>
20.	<p>Are students able to participate in vaccination programmes?</p> <p>Yes (for additional learning experiences). HEIW and NHS Wales have agreed not to fully deploy healthcare students to support the immunisation programme. This is to ensure student access to the wide set of practice learning experiences necessary for programme achievement and timely registration.</p> <p>However, where an educational audit has been undertaken by a university in partnership with placement providers, and there is necessary provision made for induction, risk assessment, supervision and assessment, students can access additional practice learning experiences within vaccination centres.</p> <p>Students will be able to participate under supervision in all stages of the vaccination process when assessing individuals presenting for vaccination, providing advice and information, obtaining informed consent, vaccine preparation and administration, record keeping and post immunisation observation.</p> <p>Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and Welsh Medicines Information Centre have developed a protocol for authorisation by Welsh Ministers to facilitate the delivery of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-12/national-protocol-for-covid-19-astrazeneca-vaccine.pdf</p> <p>NMC guidance highlights that students are supernumerary throughout their practice learning experiences and would be taught and able to practice the administration of parental medications only under supervision: nmc-response-to-the-consultation-on-changes-to-the-human-medicine-regulations-170920-003.pdf</p> <p>Students may also choose to register with Health Board and Trust 'Banks' to undertake additional paid work to support the immunisation programme.</p>

<p>21.</p>	<p>Can students be supervised to administer the flu vaccine as part of their learning experience?</p> <p>No. The flu vaccine is often supplied and administered through a Patient Group Direction (PGD). Legislation (The Human Medicines Regulations, 2012) does not allow students to administer drugs that are prescribed as part of a PGD. PGD medications can only be administered by a qualified healthcare professional and cannot be delegated. However, if a flu vaccine is not supplied through a PGD, the student can discuss with their supervisor about administration under supervision.</p> <p>See UK Government Guidance on Patient group directions here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/patient-group-directions-pgds/patient-group-directions-who-can-use-them</p>
<p>22.</p>	<p>Has the process changed if there are ongoing concerns about a student's competence/ proficiency?</p> <p>No. The same processes are in place. If there are ongoing concerns about a student's competence these should be addressed using the relevant action plan pro forma in the student's programme documentation.</p> <p>Where a student may not be meeting required practice learning outcomes, they should be at the centre of any action planning process together with nominated key staff involved including Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors, Practice Educators or equivalent roles, and Academic Assessors. Stakeholders should also include relevant individuals in Practice Education Facilitator/ Practice Educator/ Education Liaison Nurse roles. Regulatory bodies expect healthcare professionals to role model professional behaviour for students to aspire to.</p>
<p>23.</p>	<p>A client has expressed concern about a student accompanying their Practice Supervisor on a home visit. How should this situation be managed?</p> <p>This scenario is not unique to the Covid-19 pandemic. Individuals can refuse entry of any health or care professional to their home, but this situation may arise more often as individuals are feeling more anxious about the amount of people involved and the potential spread of Covid-19 at this time.</p> <p>It will be helpful to discuss this potential issue with the student at the beginning of each working day and, if the supervisor feels it is appropriate, contact can be made beforehand with the client to alert them to the student's presence.</p>

	<p>This would allow the supervisor to reassure clients about infection control measures they and the student will adhere to when conducting home visits, allowing the client to make an informed choice.</p>
<p>24.</p>	<p>How can students maintain social distancing when travelling to a community visit with their Practice Supervisor or Educator?</p> <p>Car sharing for community placements should only be considered if alternative arrangements are not possible. Travel arrangements should always be discussed in advance if students are accompanying their Practice Supervisor/Educator as part of community visits to clients.</p> <p>If no other options are feasible, and car sharing is agreed with the Practice Supervisor/Educator, this can be considered, but students must adhere to latest government recommendations and follow professional advice from placement staff and their university.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements such as students using their own car or cycling or walking (if reasonable distances permit) may be possible. If using public transport to a community visit, students should follow Welsh Government guidance on travelling safely: https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-coronavirus-guidance-public (for travel cost claims please see Question 35).</p> <p>Students must always follow general infection prevention and control measures including hand washing protocol, adhere to social distancing advice and use personal protective equipment (PPE) where appropriate and when directed in delivering care.</p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>How can organisations be assured that a reconfigured placement due to Covid-19 is able to provide a safe and effective learning environment for students?</p> <p>Where possible, a full practice learning environment audit should be undertaken of clinical areas where students are undertaking practice learning experiences.</p> <p>However, during the emergency period a modified <i>Covid-19 Temporary Educational Audit</i> has been produced which is intended for use (as required) particularly for assurance that a new or reconfigured practice setting provides a safe and effective learning environment.</p> <p>The modified educational audit can be conducted remotely over the phone, or by using an electronic communication tool, or where appropriate in person.</p> <p>Access the educational audit document here: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-temporary-educational-audit-of-the-practice-learning-environment/</p>

26. What about a healthcare student who has a placement in a non-client facing setting? Will they still be able to achieve learning outcomes?

Yes. There are several competencies/ proficiencies that healthcare students can look to work towards achieving in a non-client facing placement.

See guidance for nursing students here:

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/practice-learning-outcomes-in-non-client-facing-placements/>

Where a student's individual risk assessment indicates a non-client facing placement is appropriate, this should form part of individual discussions between a student and relevant University staff. These discussions must also detail any reasonable adjustments required to support placement learning.

Universities and Placement Providers will advise on the potential non-client facing placement areas available within local allocation circuits to respond to individual student circumstances.

Should a suitable placement not be possible given a student's individual Covid-19 Risk Assessment score, and a theory only pathway is not available, a temporary period of 'special leave' can be considered rather than a suspension of studies (**HEIW have agreed that the period of 'special leave' and any required make-back time will be supported by continued bursary payment in order that those students are enabled to complete their programmes*).

27. What happens if a student's Practice Assessor/Educator or equivalent supervisor is moved to another practice area because of Covid-19 related workforce needs?

In these circumstances it is possible for the student to remain in the same placement and be reassigned another Practice Assessor/Educator or equivalent role or alternatively, it may be deemed possible for the student to move with their Practice Assessor/Educator to their new area of work.

If a move with the Practice Assessor/Educator is considered possible, the placement team managers in both placements would need to confer to ensure workforce requirements would allow any move to take place. The placement team should also seek advice from their local Practice Education Facilitator/ Practice Educator/ Educational Liaison Nurse or equivalent role.

If a move is supported by all parties, a relevant University link should also be contacted to ensure that the practice area has been audited and deemed appropriate for placements.

<p>28.</p>	<p>Are healthcare students able to work as a Health Care Support Worker in the same environment they are on placement?</p> <p>Yes. During current pandemic conditions students will be permitted to register with their local nurse bank and work as Health Care Support Workers in the same environment they may also be undertaking an allocated placement. However, HCSW hours worked do not count as programme practice hours.</p> <p>This working/student pattern must be with the agreement of the placement manager. Decisions will be based on local infection prevention and control policies which may limit footfall across clinical environments.</p> <p>Supervision, assessment, and delegation arrangements must clearly differentiate between time when students are continuing to work towards achievement of practice learning outcomes, and when they are working in a Health Care Support Worker role. The Working Time Directive and the implementation of a maximum 48-hour working week must be adhered to: https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>Who should students’ approach if they are anxious or unsure about returning to placements?</p> <p>Students should contact their University Personal Tutor/Academic Mentor to review their individual circumstances and decide on a way forward to ensure signposting of students to well-being services if appropriate and to discuss any adjustments that may be required to alleviate placement concerns.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>What are the contingency plans for student placements during regional Covid-19 outbreaks and imposition of local restrictions?</p> <p>Local Level Agreement protocol between HEIW, Universities and Placement Providers includes a requirement that reports impacting on student learning experiences are escalated to relevant parties. Hosted by HEIW, an All Wales Placement Reference Group including representation from all key stakeholders in Wales has been established to respond to emerging service and academic student pressures.</p> <p>Contingency planning is guided by Covid-19 Placement Recovery Principles agreed by key stakeholder organisations in Wales to support healthcare students’ safe return to practice learning (Sept 2020).</p> <p>Access the Covid-19 Placement Recovery Principles document here: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/all-wales-covid-19-placement-recovery-principles/</p>

	<p>The principles include instigation of reactivation placement action plans should there be a decision to temporarily suspend student placements, and notification of a requirement to complete any professional regulator exception-reports.</p>
<p>31.</p>	<p>Will students who are due to complete their programme have a period of preceptorship following registration?</p> <p>Yes. Once students’ register and become an employee, all health and social care organisations in Wales will provide new registrants with a period of preceptorship. Organisations are particularly conscious that students are taking up employment at an unprecedented time of change for healthcare services. Preceptorship arrangements must benchmark against principles of practice excellence such as clinical induction, clinical supervision, reflective practice and peer debriefing.</p> <p>See All Wales Core Principles for Preceptorship: http://www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1178/Final%20Report%20for%20Preceptorship.pdf</p> <p>See Nursing and Midwifery Council Principles for preceptorship: https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-principles-for-preceptorship-a5.pdf</p> <p>Health & Care Professions Council: https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/ Academy for Healthcare Science: https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/news-events/news/</p>
<p>D: University/ Placement Provider processes</p>	
<p>32.</p>	<p>What happens if a student is undertaking a placement and they or one of their family members needs to self-isolate?</p> <p>If a student has tested positive, is asymptomatic or is experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 during a placement, they must self-isolate and follow stay at home guidance: https://gov.wales/stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus https://gov.wales/self-isolating-your-shared-home-during-coronavirus-pandemic</p> <p>The student should also immediately inform their Practice Supervisor, Placement Team Manager and nominated University contacts. Students will need to comply with the sickness/absence reporting procedures of the placement setting and university processes for reporting sickness/absence. In addition, each university will have specific reporting and support arrangements in place for students who test positive for Covid-19. These must be followed.</p>

<p>33.</p>	<p>Will usual placement allocations be revised due to a prolonged period of reconfigured healthcare services due to Covid-19?</p> <p>There may need to be some changes to placement structure compared to students' usual allocation patterns. This will depend on the continuing pandemic conditions, reconfiguration of healthcare services and any additional complications associated with local Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>However, there is a commitment by all organisations in Wales that key priority will be given to the continuation of students' programmes of learning. It is essential that there is continuing availability of registrants to sustain the workforce in Wales. Universities and Placement Providers are responding to local circumstances to offer learning experiences which match the requirements of programme outcomes and avoid any unnecessary delays to students' programme completion.</p>
<p>34.</p>	<p>If healthcare students need to self-isolate will they be able to make up required programme hours?</p> <p>Students who have an extended period of missed practice time because of self-isolation or other health reason, may be required to make back time to ensure they have met profession-specific programme requirements. There is flexibility within programme regulations to allow for periods for sickness and authorised absence.</p> <p>Depending on the circumstances, if students experience a prolonged period of sickness, or a continued need for shielding, placements may be deferred for a period which could extend the time it takes for students to complete their programme.</p>
<p>35.</p>	<p>What should students consider when undertaking placements if they have an underlying health condition?</p> <p>Students are advised to speak with their University Personal Tutor/Academic Mentor and follow the guidance regarding underlying health conditions https://phw.nhs.wales/</p> <p>Given the increased risks associated with Covid-19, students would not be expected to undertake a placement should they be at increased risk of severe illness relating to their own health and/or with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>In these situations, universities will discuss alternative options with students including a period of authorised absence, special leave arrangements, or a suspension of studies, or if available, an alternative academic pathway.</p>

	<p>Students must complete an individual risk assessment using the All Wales Covid-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool (or equivalent tool used by their University) prior to undertaking a placement: https://gov.wales/covid-19-workforce-risk-assessment-tool</p> <p>If a student is able to undertake a placement following their individual risk assessment score, they will record this along with other assurance of pre-placement induction in an 'All Wales Safe-Return Placement Passport:' https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-placement-recovery-student-passport-form/ (*the passport now includes a record of student's Covid-19 vaccination).</p>
<p>36.</p>	<p>What if issues arise with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) fit testing during placements?</p> <p>Students must have an effective safety induction prior to commencing each practice placement, ensuring they are familiar with emergency procedures, reporting mechanisms and any equipment they may be asked to use including appropriate fit testing and use of PPE.</p> <p>Should there be any concerns about the availability of PPE, students should immediately bring this to the attention of Practice Supervisors, the Placement Team Manager and speak to the local Practice Education Facilitator/ Education Liaison Nurse Team/ University link.</p> <p>Alternatively students can contact the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) email hub: HEIW.EdCommissioning@wales.nhs.uk</p>
<p>37.</p>	<p>Will there be an extension to the time a student would have expected to complete their programme and register with the NMC?</p> <p>Health Education and Improvement Wales is working with Universities and Placement Providers to review the on-going impact of Covid-19 and revised programme arrangements for healthcare students.</p> <p>Healthcare students are still required to meet all programme learning outcomes to enter their relevant professional register.</p> <p>The effects of pandemic conditions are under continuous review and subject to individual circumstances. Organisations are working to ensure there are only minimal delays to students' date of completion of programmes and professional registration.</p>

<p>38.</p>	<p>What should students consider if travelling to a University or placements on public transport?</p> <p>For those students travelling to University or placement settings using public transport, they must follow Welsh Government guidance on travelling safely: https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-coronavirus-guidance-public</p> <p>As key workers, students can travel for the purposes of work and education and for placement learning. This includes travel across restricted boundaries in order to continue an allocated placement: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-position-statement-v2/</p> <p>Students must also adhere to the All-Wales uniform dress code compliance in and outside of placement settings https://gov.wales/nhs-dress-code</p>
<p>39.</p>	<p>What if a student has difficulty getting to their placement due to regular disruption to public transport?</p> <p>If students are having regular difficulties attending their allocated placement due to disruption of public transport, they should discuss this with their Practice Supervisor in the placement setting and their University Personal Tutor/Academic Mentor to find a pragmatic solution.</p> <p>It may be possible to negotiate more flexible shift patterns whilst also looking to see whether reasonable alternative travel options are possible on a case by case basis. Universities may also have capacity to review the location of placements for those students who are non-drivers, to see if a placement is feasible closer to home.</p> <p>General sharing of vehicles to travel to the placement base, with people who are not part of household or your extended household, is not recommended currently because of the difficulties of maintaining physical distancing (<i>please also refer back to Question 24</i>).</p>
<p>40.</p>	<p>What if a student tests positive for Covid-19 or has been alerted by a contact tracing team and are living in shared accommodation - do they self-isolate?</p> <p>Yes. If a student has tested positive, is asymptomatic or is experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 and is sharing communal living quarters, they must self-isolate. Students must also follow guidance from contact tracing teams.</p> <p>Students required to self-isolate must inform their identified University contacts including the University Student Services Team, the student’s Personal Tutor/Academic Mentor or Departmental Lead and the relevant Placement Team Lead if undertaking practice learning at the time.</p>

	<p>Universities monitor the number of students who are staying in or around the university and will put in place additional support measures for students who are self-isolating.</p> <p>Universities have a duty of care towards students and will prioritise support for vulnerable learners. University student services teams will provide direct student contact including, if required, a review of the appropriateness of individual student's shared accommodation if this impacts on their ability to self-isolate.</p>
<p>41.</p>	<p>A placement setting is providing care for patients/clients who are Covid-19 positive. Are allocated students eligible for short term accommodation during this time?</p> <p>It may be possible for students to secure accommodation on Health Board or University sites, subject to capacity. Students requiring temporary accommodation are advised to contact the accommodation hub managers in the relevant Health Board or the University accommodation team in the first instance.</p> <p>HEIW will support accommodation costs that are incurred due to Covid-19 if above the normal accommodation costs rules. Costs can only be supported if solely placement related, and a rationale must be provided with evidence.</p>
<p>42.</p>	<p>What additional costs can students claim because of not being able to travel with their supervisor on a community visit?</p> <p>HEIW will support travel expenses for students using own vehicles and public transport during community placements (when previously they would have shared cars with a practitioner).</p> <p>Students may claim the cost of travel from home to their placement base, less the cost of travel to their normal place of study (this is termed 'excess mileage').</p> <p>In addition, students may claim the costs of using their own car for 'onward community travel' starting from the placement base to other clinical placement settings and/or clients' home addresses. Travel costs are paid at NHS Agenda for Change public transport rate.</p> <p>Where students regularly need to take their own car to visit clients as part of placement learning (when normally they would share with a supervisor), the student base for travel claims should be changed to reflect the placement location. Students must also have business use insurance.</p>

<p>43.</p>	<p>What additional costs are available to support students?</p> <p>HEIW will support the costs of headsets to allow students to access online consultations if it can be evidenced that this will be required during their placement.</p>
<p>44.</p>	<p>How do healthcare students access the Covid-19 vaccine?</p> <p>All healthcare students (nursing, midwifery, allied health profession, healthcare science, medical and physician associate students) undertaking practice placements will be offered the Covid-19 vaccine alongside their professional colleagues and in line with the priority group scheduling of individual health and care settings.</p> <p>With high rates of Covid-19, it is important to protect staff against coronavirus, avoid pressure on the NHS and safeguard health and social care services.</p> <p>Anyone invited for a vaccination will be required to give informed consent and be given the relevant information to book a first vaccine and be signposted to a vaccination centre. They will then receive an automatic recall for the second vaccine.</p> <p>Once students have confirmation of a booking to receive the vaccine, they will still be able to attend this appointment even if their placement comes to an end in the meantime. As students receive their Covid-19 vaccine doses, they should record this within their All Wales Safe-Return Placement Passport: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid19-placement-recovery-student-passport-form/</p> <p>See HEIW/ Welsh Government position statement – Healthcare students’ access to Covid-19 vaccination: https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-position-statement-on-healthcare-students-access-to-covid-19-vaccination/</p>
<p>45.</p>	<p>How can healthcare students access the flu vaccine?</p> <p>All healthcare students are recommended to have the flu vaccine in view of their direct patient/client contact, to help protect themselves, colleagues, and those in their care.</p> <p>Universities across Wales have arrangements in place to enable students’ access to the flu vaccine often via Health Board Occupational Health Departments. However, students are advised to contact their University in the first instance to confirm local arrangements.</p>

46. What support is available for healthcare students to discuss concerns?

Healthcare students are advised to contact their University or speak to placement staff in the first instance. Students can also access a HEIW main contact mailbox: heiw@wales.nhs.uk

Health for Health Professionals Wales also offers a free, confidential service now available to all Health Professionals and Healthcare Students working in NHS Wales. <https://www.hhpwales.co.uk/>

Students can also seek advice from their professional body.