



Welsh Government/ HEIW Position statement Optometry student key worker status 11.10.20.

This position statement confirms undergraduate optometry students as having continued key worker status when undertaking clinical skills training as part of their programme of learning.¹

Welsh Government/ Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) recognise the valued contribution healthcare students have made to health and care delivery throughout pandemic conditions. With a move beyond student contract deployment and regulatory emergency standards to 'new normal' clinical practice arrangements, the input students continue to make in enhancing care provision alongside their personal learning is considerable.

Universities and all key stakeholders have revised arrangements in place to enable students (subject to individual risk assessment), to continue clinical skills learning opportunities and work towards the timely completion of programme requirements notwithstanding the continuing impact of pandemic conditions.

A set of All Wales COVID-19 Principles provide guidance for Universities and key bodies in relation to clinical skills learning in COVID-19 adapted circumstances:

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/all-wales-covid-19-placement-recovery-principles/>;
<https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/covid-19-principles-for-restarting-med-ed/>

Welsh Government/ HEIW confirm that optometry students will continue to retain key worker status whilst undertaking clinical practice and access necessary documentation to substantiate this.

Welsh Government/ HEIW recognise that as key workers, undergraduate optometry students may also be required to cross localised lockdown boundaries in order to continue their clinical practice experience. Wherever possible, Universities 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.

Links: All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool: <https://gov.wales/checkyourrisk>'

¹ 'Reasonable excuse' to enter or leave a COVID-19 restricted boundary includes "travel for work or education" (COVID-19 update 16.09.20. Welsh Minister for Health and Social Services).