

Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Program

Clinical Educator Tip Sheet

“Structuring the Placement”

This tip sheet provides suggestions on how to structure the placement. It covers the following topics:

- Weekly timetable
- Orientation
- Identifying learning opportunities
- Planning for unexpected absences
- Student Activity Plan

Weekly Timetable

It is beneficial to have a weekly timetable, with all activities throughout the initial weeks of placement diarised. It can be helpful to discuss with the student how they like to plan their time either using a diary, electronic calendar or weekly timetable. Consider providing the student with a timetable sheet for each week of their placement if appropriate.

Following the initial week or two, encourage the student to continue their timetable.

Ideas for what to include in the weekly timetable include:

- Orientation which may have been arranged by the Clinical Education Support Officer (CESO)
- A local orientation to your specific area of work
- Student in-service training
- Departmental in-service training
- Team meetings
- Time to see patients
- Dedicated reflection time
- Workshadowing other team members
- Administrative time, for self-directed activity eg. a project, reading, using departmental resources
- Weekly Supervision and feedback sessions

Orientation

Orientation should include the following topics:

- Basic organisational information and governance structure
- The goals of the unit
- Overall aims of your profession in this clinical environment
- Staff and their roles
- Information on clinical handover processes
- Information on obtaining patient consent
- Information on checking patient ID process
- Availability of and access to learning resources
- Toilets, lockers, door access and keys
- Expectations for uniform and showing student ID

What learning opportunities can your facility offer?

When structuring the placement think broadly about learning opportunities. You may wish to brainstorm and make a list of these. Consider: projects, education, client related work (including assessment and interventions), professional and inter-professional opportunities. Consider what you would expect the student to achieve, who is responsible for co-ordinating this and who will be overseeing the opportunity. (QOTFC, 2007)

How to plan for the unexpected absence of a clinical educator (eg client emergency / crisis, urgent complex workload issues, RDO, leave, meetings, training)

- Encourage the student to return to their timetable or list of things to do and complete self-directed tutorials / learning packages / resources / readings / reflection activities
- In instances of an emergent urgent client issue, consider if it is appropriate for the student to observe (even if they can't directly contribute, it is useful for them to know what you are involved in)
- Consider if there are clients the student could see alone and feedback when you return
- Help the student to develop a project early in the placement so they can work on it as needed
- Don't book all observational visits in advance of the placement, check out possibilities and keep some in reserve
- Ask other staff you work more directly with if they would be willing to have your student with them at short notice so that if the situation arises you have already made contact.
- Have plenty of self-directed learning activities and readings available for the student to access in such downtime

Student Activity Plan

Some Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) utilise a Student Activity Plan (SAP) document, and dependent on capacity, the local CESO may be able to assist with developing this plan. The primary objectives of the SAP are to assist with structuring the placement and to increase student independence with their own learning. If you would like to develop an SAP, ask your local CESO for access to the document "Guide to use of Student Activity Plans".

Contents of the student activity plan may include:

- Mandatory or required training (including annual refreshers or site specific training)
- Orientation
- Tutorials delivered by CESOs or other members within departments
- Recommended pre-reading and/ or links to online resources
- Self directed learning modules
- Work shadow opportunities
- Interagency visits
- Student reflection tools
- Relevant contacts and addresses
- Student feedback forms
- SPEF-R assessment to prompt midway and final reflections

References:

Queensland Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Collaborative (2007) *Clinical Educator's Kit. Part Two- Setting up and sustaining a positive student clinical placement.* p3-14.

Example Student Timetables

Dates:

Week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7.30					
8.00					
8.30					
9.00					
9.30					
10.00					
10.30					
11.00					
11.30					
12.00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12.30					
1.00					
1.30					
2.00					
2.30					
3.00					
3.30					
4.00					
4.30					

Excel Spreadsheet Example:



Weekly planner
template

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