

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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1. What is Occupational Health?

Occupational Health is concerned with minimising work-related ill-health and maximising healthy working. Our advice aims to assist you to maintain or regain your health and to ensure you are capable of undertaking your work.

You can access the impartial advice delivered by our team of occupational health professionals through a referral by your Programme Lead or Personal Tutor to our service. We can help address any issues impacting your wellbeing at work. A consultation with one of our clinicians will assess your health needs in relation to work, provide you with objective advice regarding fitness for work and how to manage your health issue. This will include reference to relevant legislation that affects health and safety at work, e.g.:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974: protects employees by requiring the employer to “safeguard, as far as is reasonably practicable, their health, safety and welfare”.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (amended 2002): requires employers to avoid or reduce risk involved in manual handling operations. Thus, students should not lift patients or heavy loads until suitable training has been given.
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999: incorporates pregnancy risk assessment.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH): requires workplace assessments with subsequent exposure control. Under this piece of legislation, **you** need to know about the nature of the substances you work with and the risks created by those substances.

Students who have applied to study certain programmes with the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences are required to obtain occupational health clearance prior to commencement of their studies. If occupational health clearance is a condition of entry on to your chosen programme and you have not had clearance confirmed by the 1st October following the start of your course, you may be required to step off the programme pending further investigation. Other students may be required to obtain occupational health clearance part way through their programme, e.g. prior to starting a placement. Details of occupational health requirements can be found in the Screening Standards Table later in this handbook.

Students experiencing health problems during their course may wish to access occupational health services via a referral by their Programme Lead or Personal Tutor for a health assessment appointment.

2. Who is the Faculty of Health and Human Science Occupational Health provider?

The Faculty of Health & Human Sciences has contracted with University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust’s Occupational Health & Wellbeing Service (OHWB) for the provision of occupational health services. OHWB’s role is to provide professional, impartial and confidential advice to both the Faculty and its students. Core services within this contract include:

- Pre-course health and immunisation screening.
- Immunisations, serology and screening.
- Referrals to an OH Nurse or OH Doctor for work-related issues.

3. Occupational Health Service - Location and Contact Details

The OHWB service is based at the Derriford Centre for Health & Wellbeing on the Derriford Hospital site of University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust. There is also limited capacity to arrange appointments in either Exeter or Truro, in situations where it may be difficult for a student to get to Plymouth for an appointment.

Derriford Hospital has the second largest bus terminal in Plymouth with buses connecting all parts of Plymouth to the hospital. The Centre is a short walk from the bus stops for students using public transport to attend appointments.

Students driving to appointments at the Centre are advised to allow sufficient time to find a parking space in order not to be late for/miss an appointment. Car Park C is closest to the Centre and

students can bring the parking token for activation at the Reception desk, which will allow them to exit the car park free-of-charge.

Occupational Health & Wellbeing
Derriford Centre for Health & Wellbeing
University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust
Derriford Road
Plymouth PL6 8DH

Phone: 01752 437222

Email: plh-tr.OccupationalHealth-Derriford@nhs.net

3.1 Hours of opening

The OHWB service at the Derriford Centre for Health & Wellbeing is open:

Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays)
From 8.00am to 4.00pm.

4. What Services do Occupational Health & Wellbeing Offer?

4.1 Pre-course Screening

If Occupational Health Clearance is a condition of entry onto your chosen programme of study, you will be required to complete a Health Questionnaire as part of the application process. You may also be required to participate in a telephone or e-mail consultation or attend an OHWB appointment to clarify any points on your questionnaire. OHWB will then establish whether you are fit to commence the programme or if further information from a GP or Specialist is required. OHWB can then advise the Faculty whether there are any recommended adjustments and whether the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010 should be considered in order to assist you with your studies.

The operational decision on implementing OHWB recommendations ultimately rests with the Professional Issues Committee of the Faculty based on a balance of your needs and the ability of the Faculty to accommodate adjustments. This Committee comprises of a panel of Academic staff from each programme within the Faculty and is co-chaired by the Associate Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the Deputy Head of School for the School of Health Professions. The Committee may seek advice from Professional Bodies, Human Resources and Professional Advisors to assist with their decisions. All cases are considered anonymously.

4.1.1 Non-Disclosure

Non-Disclosure of any medical conditions may affect your place on your chosen programme of study or the clinical placements that the Faculty obtain for you could result in possible withdrawal from the programme.

4.2 Drug Screening

To help determine your fitness to study, drugs testing may be carried out by OHWB as part of your Pre-Course Screening or randomly at the request of the Faculty at any point on your programme.

4.3 Immunisation/Screening Programme

As a Health or Social Care student, you will be expected to comply with the compulsory immunisations and/or screening standards (see attached). This is to ensure you, your patients, clients or service users during the course of your studies/placements (and future work) are protected and ensures Department of Health guidelines are being followed. These guidelines can change from time to time and you will be informed if it is required. There may be occasions where immunisations cannot be administered (**see 4.3.5**).

For the majority of programmes, immunisation/testing against Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps & Rubella and Tuberculosis is required and your immunity status will be established by a blood test if there is no documentary evidence of disease or prior screening. Varicella Zoster (Chicken Pox) immunity is established by clear confirmation of having the disease. Further screening for Varicella may be required if a student is unclear of their history or they were born or raised in a non-temperate climate.

4.3.1 Appointments regarding your Immunisation/Screening Programme

The OHWB Nurse Team will be on campus in Plymouth during induction week to see any students that require any immunisations/tests. You will be informed where to report and the time and date of your appointment. Some immunisation/screening tests will commence/continue at a later date to fit into the timings of any previous vaccinations you have had. Appointments are held in Plymouth; however we will try and arrange appointments in Exeter or Truro to minimise travel requirements for students on placement or living in those localities.

Once seen by OHWB, you will be informed of any future appointments either on the day or at a later date by means of an e-mail to your student email account or a letter to your home address. It is essential that you check your email account and post regularly for notifications as it is vital that you keep your appointments to prevent delays in completing your schedule. **See 4.4.2 and 4.4.3** below which details our cancellation policy and the charging tariff for cancellations and missed appointments.

4.3.2 Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs)

EPPs are procedures in which there is a risk that an injury to you whilst assisting in a medical or surgical procedure could result in exposure of the patient's open tissues to your blood. Usually this is due to contact with sharp instruments, needle tips and sharp tissue (spicules of bone or teeth) inside the open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space of a patient. In addition your gloved hand or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times.

Midwifery, Paramedic Practitioner, Urgent/Emergency Care will in the course of their studies undertake EPPs. Therefore, in order to protect patients, a blood test is undertaken to confirm that you are free from infection from Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV as an Identified Validated Sample ('IVS').

Please ensure you take photographic ID to your appointments as this needs to be verified by the OHWB Nurse obtaining the blood sample.

4.3.3 Existing Students Completing a Placement in an Operating Theatre or Day Surgery

If you are completing a placement in an operating theatre or day surgery where you will be undertaking EPPs and have not previously been screened and cleared for them (**see 4.3.1**), you will require a blood test to confirm that you are free from infection from Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and

HIV. Please ensure you take photographic ID to your appointments as this needs to be verified by the OHWB Nurse obtaining the blood sample.

4.3.4 Failure to Complete Immunisation Schedule

If you fail to complete the compulsory immunisation programme (see attached Screening Standards Schedule), practise placements [may](#) be affected.

4.3.5 Inability to receive Live Vaccines and/or 'Non responders' to vaccines

If you are unable to receive immunisations for health reasons or you are classed as a 'True Non-Responder' to vaccines, your case will be reviewed by the Faculty to assess whether adjustments can be made to allow you to continue on the programme.

4.3.6 Immunisations with Your GP

If you choose to have your immunisations/blood tests carried out by your GP; please be aware that some GPs will make a charge and that these fees are **not** refundable by the University.

To prevent you having appointments arranged, you must advise OHWB immediately to allow your name to be removed from the clinic appointment list. If you do not, you will be charged for each missed appointment.

You must upload the results of any immunisation/tests undertaken by your GP to your form on the OHWB Portal within one month of the immunisation/test. If you fail to do this, OHWB will arrange an appointment for you.

4.3.7 Concerns about Immunisation/Tests

Please ensure you read and understand the requirements of the immunisations/tests that are required for your chosen programme of study.

If you have concerns regarding any of the immunisations/tests, e.g. a phobia of needles, ensure OHWB are aware of any such issues, so that the appropriate measures (a longer appointment time or re-scheduling to an improved setting) can be put in place for you.

4.4 A Referral Service/Appointments

There may be circumstances, such as having a health condition or following injury or sickness absence, when the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences will wish to obtain occupational health advice on how best to support you or your ability to complete your programme and practice thereafter. You may also ask for an occupational health assessment through your personal tutor (**see 4.4.1 below**).

4.4.1 Referral appointments

You will be advised of the need for this health assessment by your Personal Tutor or Programme Lead and will normally be seen on the OHWB premises within the Derriford Centre for Health & Wellbeing at Derriford Hospital.

You will be informed of the date and time of your appointment by email or to your university student email account or via post.

It is very important that these appointments are attended.

It is important to note that University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust Occupational Health Service does not operate a self-referral facility. If you are having concerns about your own health or wellbeing, you should speak with your Programme Lead or Personal Tutor. They can then refer you to Occupational Health.

If you are generally unwell please seek advice from your General Practitioner or the Emergency Department in an emergency.

4.4.2 Cancelling/non-attendance of appointments

Failure to attend appointments and cancellations of appointments are a huge cost to the occupational health service, your faculty and the NHS. It also means that individuals have to wait longer to be seen.

You must make every effort to attend your appointment, as not attending, attending late or cancelling at short notice will prevent that appointment being offered to someone else.

If you cannot keep an appointment, you must contact us immediately on 01752 437222 (option 1) or email plh-tr.OccupationalHealthWellbeingBookings@nhs.net.

Failure to attend an appointment, or giving less than 2 working days' notice to cancel an appointment, will incur a charge to the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences, which will in turn be passed on to you. Due to the time allocated to our appointments, we may not be able to see you if you arrive late.

In addition, if you cancel an appointment with less than 2 working days' notice, the appointments administrator must seek permission from the clinician and possibly from your Faculty before another appointment can be arranged.

4.4.3 Charges for missed appointments and late cancellations

Appointment Type	DNA or Late Cancellation Charge
OH Nurse telephone screening interview	£11.80
EPP testing appointment	£25.00
Allergy/infection testing appointment	£26.00
Drug/alcohol screening appointment	£20.00
Vaccination appointment	£20.00
OH Nurse consultation	£62.87
OH Nurse follow-up appointment	£39.29
OH Nurse telephone advice appointment	£15.00 per 20mins
OH Consultant Consultation	£131.30
OH Consultant follow-up appointment	£76.32
OH Consultant Referral to other Specialist appointment	Cost + £10.00 admin fee

4.4.4 Consent to share information

Should you be required to attend an Occupational Health appointment, you will be asked to provide your consent for a report to be sent to the Compliance Team within the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences and to your Personal Tutor. Your OH clinician will discuss what will be in the report and how much personal information should be shared. With your permission, they will then forward the report and any recommendations to your Programme Team and Disability Assist (if appropriate).

You will automatically get a copy of the report. You can also request to see the report before it is dispatched to the Faculty. We will advise them that we have sent you the report for checking and the report will not then be sent until you have advised OHWB that you are happy for them to do so. If you are unhappy or disagree with any aspect of the report, you must let us know as soon as possible to minimise any delay in getting the report to your Personal Tutor and the Compliance Team. The Occupational Health specialist is not required to alter their opinion or advice on Occupational Health issues but will usually alter any agreed factual inaccuracies. You may also attach your own comments to the report.

Please note that the University and / or placement provider may have to assume that you are not fit to practice / study until advised by Occupational Health. Therefore, any delay in receiving your report could result in you being asked to stand off your programme on private study which could affect your ability to meet your professional body's required practice hours, thus making it difficult to complete your programme in a timely fashion.

4.4.5 Additional medical information

Occasionally Occupational Health will need to write to your General Practitioner / Specialist for additional information or you may be asked to see a specialist for an independent health assessment (e.g. psychologist/ psychiatrist). This will only be done with your consent. Refusal may affect Occupational Health's ability to advise the university.

4.4.6 Recommendations for adjustments

Where adjustments are recommended by Occupational Health, the operational decision on whether these adjustments can be implemented rests with the University. Consideration will be given to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and decisions will be based on a balance of both the person's needs and the operational capabilities. Very occasionally you may be required to step off your programme if the adjustments cannot be accommodated.

5. Fitness for Study

As well as complying with local policies you have a legal and ethical requirement to look after your health and to ensure that any health problems you may have do not present a risk to your patients / clients.

If you develop any significant health problems during your programme, which may have an impact on your ability to work, your safety at work or the wellbeing of your patients / clients and colleagues, you should in the first instance seek advice from your personal tutor. Your personal tutor will respect your confidentiality as far as they can. They will be able to refer you to Occupational Health for a confidential consultation if appropriate.

The list below provides some advice on a range of conditions that may affect your ability to provide care but it is not comprehensive; **if you are in any doubt seek advice from your personal tutor and / or your GP.**

- **Back pain**, particularly if severe enough to interfere with daily activities, persistent or recurrent.
- Other **musculo-skeletal problems**, which may interfere with your ability to transfer and handle clients.
- **Skin problems**, especially if affecting hands or forearms, e.g. eczema or psoriasis. It is imperative that you protect and care for your skin by using emollients regularly. Nails should be kept short, clean, and not bitten. You should not work clinically if you have fissuring, weeping, redness or flaking / peeling of the hands.
- **Epilepsy** or any condition causing a **loss or alteration of consciousness**.
- **Diabetes**, unless controlled by diet only.
- Diseases and / or medication resulting in a compromised **immune system**, e.g. HIV, some malignancies, chemotherapy and other immunosuppressant therapies including biologics for rheumatic conditions
- **Mental health problems**, including **stress**. Be aware of the pressures you are under as a student and familiarise yourself with local support mechanisms. Plymouth University Student Counselling Service offers a support service for students
- **Infections**. This includes long-term infections such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV or TB for which you should always seek Occupational Health Advice. For all other infections your hospital will have an Infection Control Policy, usually available on the Intranet. Familiarise yourself with it and ensure the continuity of safe practice as a health care professional. There are some conditions which may have little effect on you but present a big risk to patients so, if you are aware of being **in contact with, or possibly suffering symptoms of any infectious disease**, you should report it immediately to the relevant person e.g. tutor or placement supervisor.
- **Open wounds** should always be covered with waterproof dressing/plaster in the working environment. If you cannot do so or if the wound becomes infected seek advice.
- **Pregnancy**: known hazards exist in every workplace and you must inform your tutor and/or ward/department manager as soon as pregnancy has been confirmed, so that risks in the current working environment can be assessed. Pregnant healthcare students should not normally care for patients suffering from infectious diseases, especially rubella or varicella zoster (Chicken Pox). You will have your varicella status checked at the start of training and been immunised with two doses of the Mumps, Measles and Rubella vaccine if indicated.
- **Influenza** is a risk to you and an even bigger risk to your patients / clients. If you are a healthcare worker, it is your responsibility to obtain your annual seasonal flu vaccination. You may be able to obtain this immunisation at your placement setting as part of their staff immunisation programme. Otherwise you are expected to make arrangements through your GP or a local pharmacy. Some GPs will provide the immunisation free of charge to Health and Social Care workers in line with Department of Health guidance. Please be aware however that some GPs and most Pharmacies will charge for immunisations and that this fee is **not** refundable by the University.

6. Contamination Incidents (Inoculation Injuries / Body Fluid Splashes)

6.1 Prevention is key!

- Be familiar with the actions to be taken in the event of a Contamination Incident as this may differ from each placement location.
- Have important contact numbers/e-mail addresses to hand.
- Be familiar with and risk assess according to the procedure you are involved with.
- Have a sharps bin/suitable receptacle at point of use to ensure safe disposal.
- Cover any cuts/abrasions/broken skin on your hands/forearms.

6.2 In the event of a Contamination Incident

It is important that incidents are dealt with urgently and as a matter of priority.

- Follow local procedures for the Management of the Contamination Incident – if you are unsure, report to the person who is in charge of the Department, Ward, Service, etc.
- Ensure that an Incident Risk Assessment is carried out, to establish the need for any treatment or follow up blood tests.
- Inform your local Occupational Health Department if required by the Risk Assessment (and OHWB in every instance of a high risk incident).
- Inform your Academic co-ordinator and Practice Supervisor
- OHWB is available for advice/guidance and, if required, a follow up referral can be made to them via your Personal Tutor or Programme Lead.

6.3 **IMPORTANT: Guidance on Hepatitis and HIV**

A nurse, midwife, health visitor or paramedic, who believes that they may have been exposed to an infection such as HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, in whatever circumstances, should seek specialist medical advice and diagnostic testing, if applicable. They must adhere to the specialist medical advice received.

Each practitioner must consider very carefully their personal accountability, as defined in the Council's Code of Professional Conduct, and remember that they have an overriding ethical duty of care to patients.

7. Interruptions to study

All students on programmes leading to a professional qualification, who do not undertake normal programme activities for a period of 6 months or more for **any** reason (including deferral, interruption or special leave/study arrangements), must undergo a renewed enhanced DBS check and a further Occupational Health assessment before resuming study.

8. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and abuse can be experienced by women and men whatever their race, age, class, colour, ability, religion or sexuality. The violence can begin at any stage of a relationship and may continue after the relationship has ended.

The Devon & Cornwall Police non-emergency number is 101 (in an emergency, always dial 999).

For confidential and general advice for those who *do not want* the Police involved, contact:

Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service (PDAS),
Ground Floor
Prideaux Court
Palace St
Plymouth
PL1 2AY

Telephone 01752 252033

www.sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk/pdas

Plymouth Domestic Abuse Services provide support for men, women and children who need advice and protection from domestic abuse. This organisation is completely separate from the police. They have independent domestic violence advocates, who can give confidential advice and guidance from housing and personal safety, to solicitors.

Devon and Cornwall Police have further information and advice on the following web page.
www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/SupportAdvice/DomesticAbuse

1. Faculty of Health and Human Sciences Screening Standards Table 2018

Course Description	Pre-course Screening			Histories						Serology					Vaccinations			
	Paper Screen	Health Interview	Doctors Medical	Polio	Tetanus	Hep B	MMR	TB/BCG Scar Check	Chicken Pox	Hep B	MMR	Quantiferon	Chicken Pox	EPPs	Hep B	MMR	BCG/ Mantoux	Chicken Pox
Adult Nursing – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Child Nursing – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Dietetics – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Mental Health – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Midwifery – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Occupational Therapy - BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Occupational Therapy - MSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Optometry – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Paramedic Practitioner – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Physiotherapy – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Podiatry – BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Psychology Students +	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
Social Work – BA	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	<i>Vaccinations and Screening for Social Work Students is undertaken on an individual basis for students undertaking placements where it is requested they provide evidence of their status.</i>														
Social Work – MA	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	<i>Vaccinations and Screening for Social Work Students is undertaken on an individual basis for students undertaking placements where it is requested they provide evidence of their status.</i>														
Urgent and Emergency Care - BSc	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary
NHS Research Passports	✓	only if necessary	only if necessary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	only if necessary	only if necessary	X	✓	✓	X	only if necessary

*Students in microbiology laboratories will also need vaccinations for Typhoid, Meningitis (ACWY Vax) and Diphtheria plus others as advised by placement area.

+Vaccinations and Screening for Psychology students is undertaken on an individual basis for students undertaking placements where it is requested they provide evidence of their status.