



FHHS Guidance for supporting students requiring reasonable adjustments in practice placements.

INDEX	Page
Section 1 :	
Introduction	2
Disclosure	3
Reasonable Adjustments and Confidentiality in the Placement Setting	4
Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties	5
Sensory Impairments	5
Visual Impairments	5
Auditory Impairments	5
Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Sensory Impairments	6
Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Mental Health Difficulties	6
Physical Disabilities Including Unseen Disabilities	7
Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Physical and Unseen Disabilities	7
Section 2:	

Procedure for Establishing Reasonable Adjustments for students on Placement 9

1. Pre-placement 11
During placement
Post-placement

2. If a Student Discloses a Disability During Placement 11

Appendix A: 12

1. Practice Placement Sharing of Information Consent Form

2. Pre-Placement Assessment of Student's Requirements Form

3. Practice Placement Support Agreement

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Section 1

Introduction

The Faculty of Health and Human Science aims to promote a climate where diversity and difference are valued and where attitudes to learning and placement experiences are flexible. This guidance has been produced to help safeguard equality of placement provision for disabled students, to ensure disabled students have access to fulfilling placement experiences.

Reasonable Adjustments and Meeting Professional Standards

There is no requirement to compromise professional standards; rather it is the methods by which those standards are to be assessed or performed that may require reasonable adjustment.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled people, or treat a disabled person less favourably because of a disability. This applies to work-based placement, that places duties on both universities and placement providers not to discriminate against disabled students whilst on placement and to **make reasonable adjustments to ensure the placement is accessible**.

It is the Students responsibility to disclose a disability; however, the university is ultimately responsible for making the placement provider aware of the requirements of the placement student, the need to make reasonable adjustments and for ensuring, as far as possible, that disabled students are not disadvantaged before, during or after placement.

A reasonable adjustment represents the method by which discrimination against a disabled person can be avoided. This may involve, for example, removing a physical barrier or providing extra support to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, a disabled worker has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person.

Not all disabled students require reasonable adjustments on placement, however under the law, placement providers have to make reasonable adjustments even though the student is not a paid employee. However, the placement provider would

not be expected to fund expensive reasonable adjustments for a student who is there for a short time.

Individual circumstances will dictate what is seen as a 'reasonable adjustment.'

Factors to consider will include:

- The type of work experience, its duration and its significance to the programme.
- The implications of the student's disability.
- Patient safety
- The cost and practicality of a specific adjustment.
- The financial resources available.
- The general availability of technical or personal assistance.
- Health and safety considerations.
- The maintenance of academic and/or professional standards.
- The relevant interest of others

Some students will be happy to suggest their own reasonable adjustments based on prior experience. Some reasonable adjustments may be useful for a range of disabilities/impairments, for example, flexibility over start time may be helpful for a student who has mental health difficulties or chronic fatigue syndrome.

Consideration should also be given to the setting and the workload of each placement, as this may alter the reasonable adjustment required. For example, a student who has difficulties processing information may require a smaller caseload in a busy acute hospital, to allow time for writing up notes. However, this may not be necessary if working with a smaller caseload over a longer period of time, for example in an assertive outreach setting.

Disclosure

- Students are required to disclose health conditions for Occupational Health screening, or to OH if subsequently emerges.
- As trainee professionals, disabled and non-disabled students alike have a duty of care in relation to the care and support of patients/service users/carers. This means that seeking disclosure advice and support regarding a disability, particularly in preparation for placement learning, is

seen as safe practice and is thus an essential part of personal and professional development.

- There are a number of reasons why a person may choose not to disclose, including fear of discrimination/stigma. Also, some students may not identify themselves as disabled (for example, a student with dyslexia or a hidden disability like epilepsy). Some students may feel that reasonable adjustments are not required.
- University policy ensures that students are actively encouraged, to disclose disabilities so that they can benefit from the support of reasonable adjustments (if these are required).
- They may also choose to disclose their reasonable adjustments and not their disability. In terms of confidentiality, only key staff on the placement may need to know with the agreement of the student

Reasonable Adjustments and Confidentiality in the Placement Setting

Some students will use assistive technology in the academic setting as a reasonable adjustment to support their learning. Laptops and digital voice recorders should also be considered as reasonable adjustments by placement providers, consideration should be made in relation to infection control when using devices.

In order to keep information confidential, a strategy may need to be negotiated between the University, the student and the placement provider.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

*These are examples, not exhaustive

- For students experiencing difficulty with handwriting, an adjustment could be to permit the student to use a digital voice recorder to make audio notes during an assessment.
- For students with information processing difficulties allow additional time to complete tasks and allow flexible deadlines.
- Allow the use of assistive technology, particularly those the student may have used at university. This could include digital voice recorders, computer software that converts text to speech or supports mind mapping, or personal digital assistants to support a student with organisational difficulties (refer to page 8 for managing confidentiality).
- Supplement key instructions with writing rather than just giving these orally to facilitate understanding

Sensory Impairments

'Sensory impairment' or 'sensory loss' are umbrella terms used to describe loss of the distance senses i.e. sight and hearing.

At times, it may be obvious that a person is either deaf, blind or deafblind. However, many people have developed coping strategies, which may unintentionally conceal their impairment.

Visual Impairments

This could include students whose sight is only slightly affected to a very small proportion who are totally blind and cannot distinguish light from dark.

Auditory Impairments

There are four types of hearing impairment and these can range from mild to profound hearing loss.

There is a distinction between those who are Deaf (people who have lost hearing at an early age and have not grown up in the hearing world) and people who are deaf with a lower case 'd' (people who have a physical loss hearing whose first language

will be spoken). The distinction is important as it relates to how language is acquired and used. People who are Deaf may have British Sign Language as their first language.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Sensory Impairments

- Arrange a pre-placement orientation and familiarisation visit – this will be particularly beneficial for a student with a visual impairment.
- Voice-recognition screen-reading software may be provided for someone who is visually impaired; consideration of patient confidentiality needs to be considered when used.
- A deaf student could use a lip-speaker in order to interpret patient information.
- Providing an amplified telephone for someone who is hearing impaired.
- Allow a student to sit/stand facing the person speaking in hand over/ward rounds/ other meetings.
- Consider the level of background noise when explaining interventions etc.
- Consider not working nights on a ward area – as unlikely to hear call bells

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Mental Health Difficulties

- Allowing non-standard start and finish times (for instance, so that an individual who has depression can start work later in the day as the side effects of the medication they are taking mean that they find mornings difficult).

- Provide written instructions as a supplement to verbal, to help compensate for concentration levels.
- Allow flexible hours, to permit appointments with counsellors, mentors etc.
- Provide a quiet space for working.
- Increase frequency of supervision.

Physical Disabilities including Unseen Disabilities

Physical disabilities affecting students are diverse and can be temporary or permanent, fluctuating, stable or degenerative. Some students may experience long-term or 'unseen' disabilities such as; diabetes, epilepsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, multiple sclerosis and various forms of arthritis.

As with other health conditions, each student will need to be viewed on an individual basis as their requirements will be different. However, consideration may need to be given to allowing students time out for medical appointments.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Physical and Unseen Difficulties

- May require a placement as close as possible to the students' accommodation.
- Allow for comfort or rest breaks.
- Provide ergonomically designed furniture.
- Improving accessibility – for example, providing handrails, a ramp and / or a stair lift.
- Providing an adapted keyboard or mouse for someone with arthritis.
- Moving a workstation closer to a location on the ground floor for an individual who has mobility problems.

- Consider working patterns. A person with chronic fatigue may require flexible working patterns, whilst someone with diabetes may need regular patterns with set breaks to allow for regular food intake.

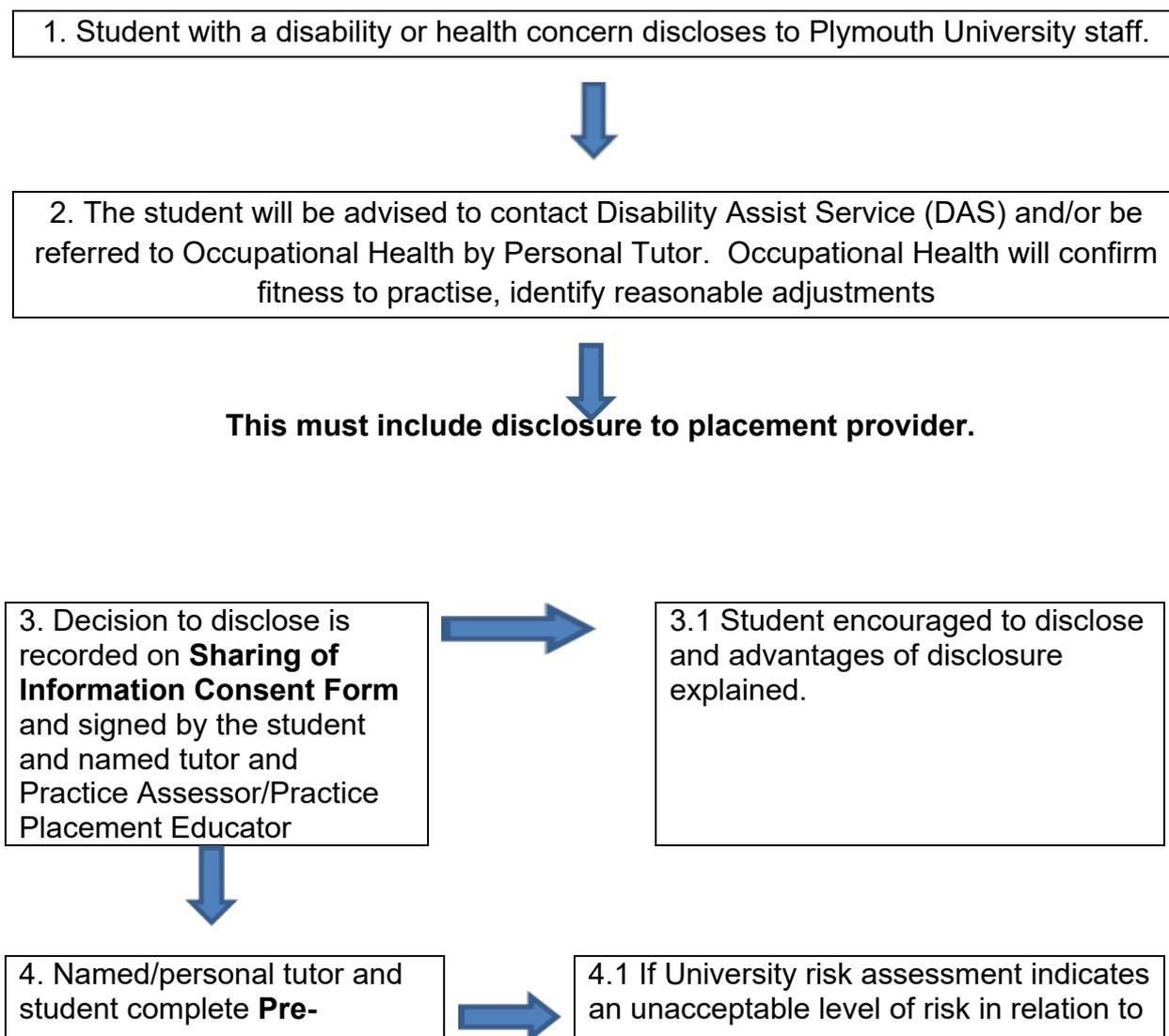
Section 2

Procedure for Establishing Reasonable Adjustments for students Placement

There is a degree of flexibility within this procedure as students' needs may vary according to a number of factors, including the placement setting, level of study and the current state of the student's health.

If a student's Practice Assessors (nursing) / Practice Placement Educators (AHP) find that by following the procedures, they are unable to resolve them, please contact the Faculty Placement Lead, placement link tutor/PDT contact or personal tutor.

1. Pre-Placement



placement Assessment of Student's Requirements Form (if appropriate) to highlight possible reasonable adjustments (RA)
These may include a variety of issues, for example; physical access, manual handling, mobility issues, fatigue and workload issues, infection control etc. NB Not all students will require RAs

duty of care to student/service users/ placement organisation then -

- a) Meet with student to discuss need for disclosure
- b) If consent not given, discuss partial disclosure, e.g. disclosure of adjustments not disability
- c) If risk is too great student will not be placed and alternative will be sought
- d) Occupational health may be involved at this point

5. Named/personal tutor or student disclose to Practice Assessor/Practice Placement Educator, clarify who and what is to be disclosed. Named/personal tutor or student to negotiate **Practice Placement Support Agreement**

Some students with less complex needs may be able to negotiate adjustments themselves.



5.1. If student has complex needs it may be necessary to discuss these with the Practice Assessor/Practice Placement Educator to check they are able to accommodate possible adjustments before allocating the student. For example, arranging a later start time.

When a student has complex needs it may be necessary to arrange a pre placement visit with student and PA/PPE. Placement provider organisation may wish to follow local policies or risk assessment. If it is likely that funded taxis or study support is required, involve DAS representative. **Practice Placement Support Agreement (PPSA)** negotiated between all parties.

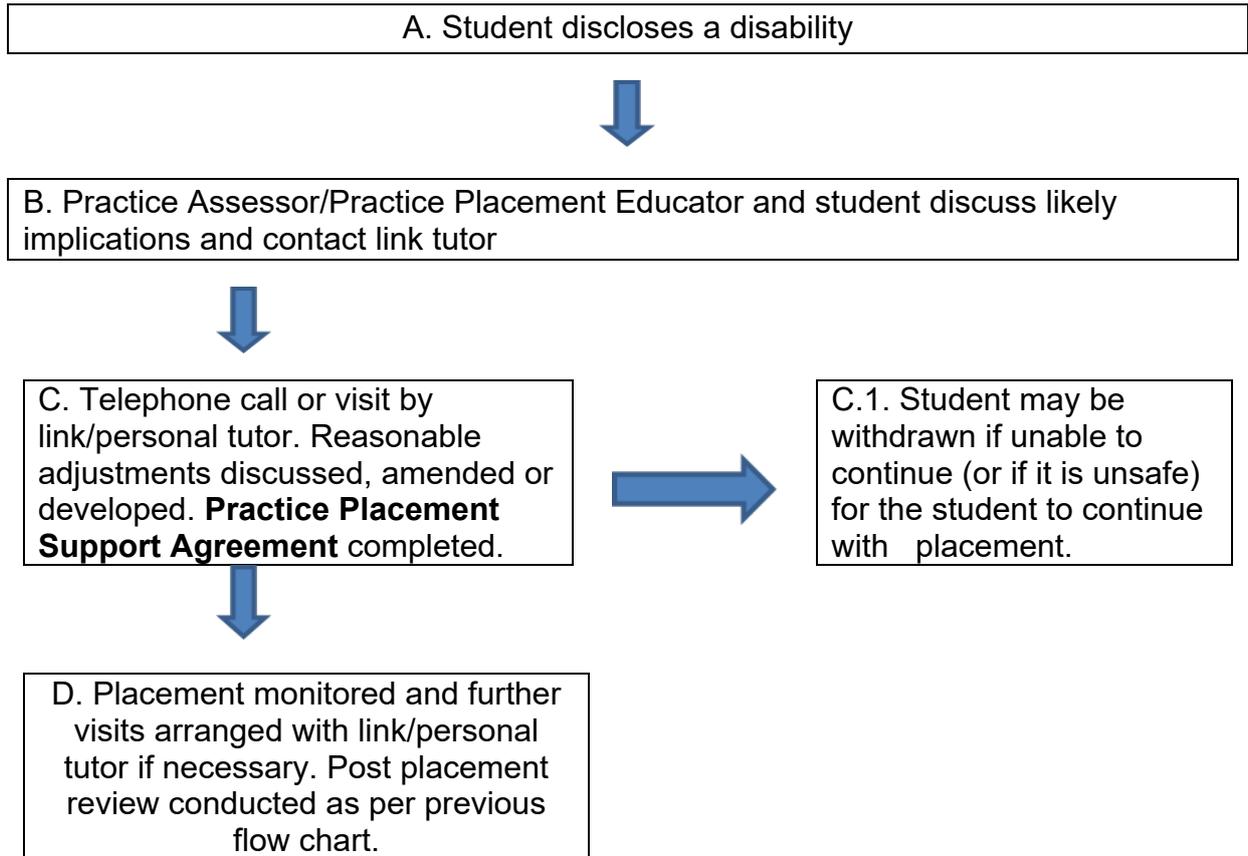
6. Named tutor or student writes up **PPSA. Tutor/Student and Practice Assessor/Practice Placement Educator sign.** Copies given to all parties.

Post-Placement
8. **PPSA reviewed** and recommendations made for further placements.

During Placement

7. Student commences placement and is monitored by link/personal tutor. Early visit made if necessary to check progress and modify **PPSA**

2. If a Student Discloses a Disability during Placement



Appendix A Record of Placement assessment and support agreements



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

Faculty of Health and Human Sciences

1. PRACTICE PLACEMENT SHARING OF INFORMATION CONSENT FORM

Student Name:

Student Number:

Programme and Year:

I authorise the University to pass on details of my disability to my practice placement assessor / educator.

I understand that a meeting may be held between me, my practice assessor/ educator and a university tutor to discuss my needs and the adjustments required.

Student Signature:

Date

Tutor Signature:

Date

I do not authorise the University to pass on details of my disability to my practice placement assessor / educator.

I understand that Plymouth University and the practice placement may not be able to make reasonable adjustments for me and that I can change my decision at any time in which case I will contact the University.

Student Signature:

Date

Tutor Signature:

Date

2. PRE-PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S REQUIREMENTS FORM



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**

Faculty of Health and Human Sciences

Student Name:

Student Number:

Programme and Year:

Placement Related Area	Support Required	Support Available	Additional Support
Transport arrangements and accommodation			
Work environment and Accessibility			
Specialist equipment and Software			
Format of material, print/electronic			
Support worker/enabler requirements			

Working hours and arrangements including rest breaks			
Work load planning			
Other (E.g. manual handling, infection control).			

3. PRACTICE PLACEMENT SUPPORT AGREEMENT



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

Faculty of Health and Human Sciences

Student Name:

Name of Placement Provider:

Dates of Placement:

Practice Assessor/Practice Placement Educator:

The following adjustments will be made for the duration of the placement:

Adjustment	Provider/Funder of Adjustment

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TUTOR

The named tutor will monitor progress and support.

Named Tutor:

Date:

Contact details:

STUDENT

I agree with the adjustments above and I understand that I should notify my placement Assessor/Educator if, for any reason I am unable to attend my work placement.

Student:

Date:

PRACTICE ASESSOR/PLACEMENT EDUCATOR

I agree with the adjustments above and I understand the need to contact the named tutor if any problems arise with the placement.

Practice Assessor/Placement Educator:

Date:

**Following Assessment and the Support Agreement. Please place a copy
in the students' personal file**