

**Good luck on your
placement from**



Here's a handy guidebook to help you along your way. It's full of hints, tips and advice to help you have the most stress-free placement possible!

Hello!

Embarking on your first placement can be pretty daunting—but don't panic! Everyone is in the same boat.

We have asked YOU and your fellow students for your top-tips about how best to survive your placement, and this booklet is the result!

On the following pages, you'll find lots of quotes from your peers and other advice to help you throughout your time away on placement.

Just remember:

“It really isn't that bad! You're not alone!”

Finding placement accommodation

When possible, try and plan your accommodation as early as possible so it's another thing off your mind! Here are some things to consider when looking for accommodation:

Location:

- *Pick somewhere that is close to the location of study/ the main hospital! Traveling adds more time, stress and financial worries to the already stressful list!"*

Cost

- *Apply for nurses accommodation if short of cash, although be prepared, what you pay for is what you get.*
- *"Get a cheap family run b&b most will take you under their wing and treat you as family and some will give discount for long stay which many chains like travel lodge and premier inn do not"*

Shop around!

- *Check cohort Facebook pages in the period prior to placement, as there are often rooms advertised by other students that may live near to your placement area, offering accommodation at a subsidised rate.*
- *Look around, in university cities there are often empty student rooms around especially in the summer.*

Facilities

- *Be prepared for quite basic accommodation but it does the job The Wi-Fi can be temperamental so perhaps use phone or dongle.*
- *If you are using your own car - ensure you can park at your placement location - if not - choose walking distance accommodation."*
- *Ask if they have cooking facilities at night. Nothing worse than only being able to cook a pot noodle in your room after a 12 hour shift."*

Staying away from home and loneliness

- *Choose accommodation that suits you and your personality type, ie, quiet, own space, communal, lively.*
- *Bring your own duvet and pillows if you can to make it feel more like home*
- *Find accommodation somewhere close but with other people to help with loneliness*

Sort out your travel arrangements!

If you're confident on how to get to your placement, without getting lost, it's one less thing to worry about and will help make your first day run that little bit smoother. If you have time, why not take a test-trip to your placement the day before you start?

"Nothing can prepare you to be less nervous. However, ensuring you give yourself plenty of time to reach your placement destination/area and know how to get there if placed far away from home address, an hour or more; this will not make you less nervous but more in control of your emotions and feelings and give you time to try and focus"

"Always find out about parking facilities including permits well in advance so you don't end up paying full price."

"Buses will be the end of you but it's easier and cheaper than driving. Try and walk to placement if you can it helps with the sleeping."

You can find more guidance on travel and accommodation on POPPI and POW

How do you know what to expect? Or what is expected of you!

It's to be expected to be nervous about entering a new environment for the first time, so don't worry too much! Going into your placement with an open mind is the best way to learn.

POPPI and POW contains lots of information about placements, including the environment you will be in, and what to expect whilst on placement. Your OAR can also be a good point of reference, so make sure you read these thoroughly before starting. You can also try contacting your placement and mentor directly, and ask any other questions you may have.

[LINKS TO POPPI AND POW](#)

Meeting your mentor

Your placement mentor will be an extremely important contact for you during your placement and can be the "make or break" for your placement experience. So it's understandable that many students are concerned about their mentor! Meeting your mentor prior to your placement (where possible) can help alleviate this concern.

"I met with my educator 2 weeks beforehand. Finding out how lovely she was really reassured me!"

It's also good to know that most mentors will have supported many other students before you, so they have a good understanding of what you will be going through.

In the unlikely instance that you are experiencing huge issues with your mentor, **the UPSU Advice centre will be able to help. You can find their contact details at the back of this booklet.**

"The mentors really do have your best interest at heart and are understanding that you may not be comfortable in all situations."

Worried about... Not knowing enough or making mistakes?

You're not alone! 1/4 of students said this was their biggest concern about starting their first placement! This is why you are on placement—to learn!

“Mentors do not expect you to know everything/anything on your first placement. All that you need to be able to do is work hard and listen.”

“Ask lots of questions - it won't make you look like you don't know anything when you feel like you should - it shows that you are interested”

“Admit mistakes, understand the rationale to why something may have been a mistake, accept it and learn from it.”

“Keep a good stash of pens on your person. Have a new notebook for each placement to put information to research or look up later.”

Worried about...fitting into your new team, or being a burden to them?

That's normal too! 20% of students have this same worry . Here are some of your do's and don'ts about fitting in to your new team:

Do:

- √ Offer to make the round of tea.
- √ Explain what you are confident at doing, and what you are nervous about.
- √ Ask questions but respect when people are busy.
- √ Strike up conversation (ask them about their first day as an ice-breaker)
- √ Be yourself!
- √ Use active listening skills and smile!

Don't:

- × Get involved in conflicts between other members of staff (nod and smile!)
- × Shy away from nitty gritty jobs—get involved!
- × Get defensive when you receive feedback—you're there to learn
- × Use your mobile phone (unless on break). It looks like you aren't interested.
- × Be afraid to talk about personal life outside of placement.

Time management is key!

The concept of 12 hour shifts, night shifts, whilst staying away from home in a new environment WHILST studying, can be overwhelming! Don't panic! Take everything one step at a time, and before you know it, you'll get into the swing of things.

Keep note of the tasks you are completing as you go along, to make filling out your paperwork much easier at the end.

"Know there isn't that much to do if you organise your time effectively. Compartmentalise your jobs: focus on placement when on placement, focus on study time only when studying, revise during your revision slots. Be in the present moment. We are given time to revise and complete module work which is helpful. Use your time wisely."

"Hospital libraries are really useful when trying to do a module essay away from Uni. Always try to remain positive and talk to other students, your mentor or your tutor if you have concerns."

"Try and set aside a day off a week to do uni work/OAR it makes it easier than Leaving it to the last minute"

"Try to hit the ground running, aim to get something accomplished on your portfolio and signed every day, that way you will not have to worry about it in the last week and panic."

Look after yourself!

Make sure you are getting enough to eat, drink and enough sleep. It may seem like you don't have enough hours in the day, but without looking after yourself, everything will become more difficult.

Comfy shoes is a must, your feet will ache by the end of your placement if you are on your feet all the time. Clarks Uniloo shoes are the bomb!

Take lip balm in your pocket when on the wards. The dry atmosphere makes your lips crack and mine were scaly after the first day!!

Always take a sandwich with you on the first day till you know what facilities they have, Soup is useless without a microwave."

Have spare underwear and socks in your bag! (Amniotic fluid gets everywhere) don't worry so much about carrying a spare uniform as you can grab some scrubs. Comfy shoes are a must. Keep deodorant in your bag. Keep hydrated, have a plastic water bottle with your name in the office, have a gulp every time you walk past. "

Ensure you can prepare yourself something to eat, such as a ready meal or having a fridge to place some milk in to have breakfast. It is really important that you eat as well as you can on placement, you need all the energy you can get, if you do not eat properly you become very fatigued and cannot perform well.

Drink water not coffee on night shifts as you will struggle to sleep when you finish.

ONE POT/MUG RECIPE IDEAS

Are you stuck with accommodation with no cooking facilities? Did you know that you can cook using just a kettle and a thermos flask? Here are some handy recipes to try!

Cinnamon Raisin Oatmeal

Porridge is a great meal to keep you going throughout the day. To cook using a thermos—you will need to prepare the night before.

Ingredients

Oats
Water
1/2 tsp Cinnamon
Handful of Raisins
1 tblsp brown sugar

Recipe

- Fill your thermos with boiling water, and set to one side to warm up the flask.
- Measure out your oats and water in a ratio of 1:3. You need to leave enough room for the oats to expand in your thermos.

- Pour out the water in your flask and re-fill with oats and measured, boiled water.
- Close the flask, give it a few shakes and leave it overnight.
- In the morning, if the oats aren't hot, add a little hot water to warm through.
- Stir in the sugar, cinnamon and raisins (in that order) and enjoy!

Italian Quinoa

Ingredients

1 cup Quinoa
2 cups boiling water
1 tsp Chicken Boullion
(or crumbled stock cube)
1 tsp mixed herbs
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder

Recipe

- Fill your thermos with boiling water, and set to one side to warm up the flask.
- Rinse the Quinoa, and place into the thermos flask.
- Add all of the seasonings and boiling water.
- Close the flask, give it a few shakes and leave the quinoa to cook for 35-40 minutes.

You can also cook couscous and pasta using nothing more than a kettle and a thermos. If you also have a microwave— the options are endless! You don't have to survive on Pot Noodles!

Found any other great recipes? Why not share on your cohorts Facebook page for others to try?

UPSU Advice

The Advice Centre is here to provide advice and support to you both whilst you are studying and out on placement. Most students sail through their placements, however, some are not so lucky and can end up attending Fitness to Practice meetings, we have a wealth of experience at all levels of these meetings and we are familiar with the issues that often arise. It is always best to approach us at the earliest opportunity so that we can provide you with the best possible advice.

You may also wish to consider joining one of the professional unions, such as RCN or RCM. They offer student memberships from as little as £10 per year and the benefits are not just representation, they offer professional insurance and discounts for members, you can apply via their websites.

It is important to note that UPSU Advice is not part of the University, we offer completely confidential and impartial advice to students so anything discussed is in complete confidence. Along with academic representation the Advice Centre are the experts on the University's regulations, and how student finance interacts with the welfare benefits system.

We are open all year round, although it is always best to check our website during vacation times as we may be running a reduced service. We are situated on the first floor of the SU building on the Plymouth Campus, however, we are accessible by email and telephone and we endeavour to reply within 48 hours.

Telephone: 01752 588373 / 0800 953 0155

Email: advice@su.plymouth.ac.uk

PAGE FOR NOTES?

Fill in your own CONTACT DETAILS?

**“Believe in yourself. You are capable
otherwise you wouldn't have made the
course.”**