

PRE-QUALIFYING PLACEMENT¹ ALLOCATION N&M, OT, ODP, PT, PARAMEDIC and SOCIAL WORK

Students from Oxford Brookes University are allocated placements across a wide geographical area in order to provide sufficiently diverse experiences. The spread of placements is dependent upon programme, placement contractual arrangements with placement providers, as well as current placement capacity/availability. The possible range of placements and their spread is made explicit to students in a variety of ways for example: application packs, on open and visit days, at interview, on Practice Education web pages and at programme induction and ongoing with programme specific documents/Moodle information

Placement availability and allocation:

Placement availability is complex and dynamic and services may change dramatically with limited notice periods (especially during Covid 19). Students can only be allocated to placements that exist. It is impossible to predict at the beginning of a programme the exact provision of placements that will be available throughout the programme. Placement areas may have specific requirements that the students will be expected to meet and these are identified in placement quality assurance. Students are required to have different placement experiences during their programme, although for some programmes it is impossible to experience all the specialities and organisations. Before placements are confirmed, the learning needs of all learners and the availability of practice assessors are considered.

It is important to understand that the University will decide on the appropriate placement by taking relevant factors into account. Once a specific placement is offered then this becomes part of the curriculum offered to the student. Any unreasonable refusal of a placement may be deemed as refusing the curriculum offered, and may result in being discontinued from the programme.

Allocation parameters for all pre-registration programmes:

1. For each programme, placements provided are designed to meet the relevant professional statutory regulatory body (PSRB) requirements. This ensures that at the point of registration students are fit for practice. This is quality assured by PSRBs.
2. Work in partnership with placement providers regarding placement capacity, as formalised through agreed processes, for example, Placement Capacity Management Groups (PAMG/PCMG) and/or Practice Placement Agreements (PPAs), Covid 19 extraordinary circumstances.
3. Monitors student evaluations of placements to ensure quality of placement experience is maintained and acts on outcomes of placement quality assurance (e.g. PLEAT² or QAPL³).
4. Works in partnership with placement providers for confirmation of placement allocation prior to student and placement area notification.
5. For most programmes, students are asked to submit to PEU a Placement Planning Form (through the Practice Education Management System (PEMS)). However this does not guarantee that placements will be fully matched to the preferences expressed as placement availability is variable and complex,

¹ Placement means any practice learning experience required or undertaken as part of the programme.

² Placement Learning Environment Audit Tool (PLEAT).

³ Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) tool for Social Work.

and dependent upon capacity and fairness to all in the cohort or registered/enrolled on the relevant practice module.

6. Students are not allowed to contact and/ or organise their own placements unless undertaking an agreed elective experience as part of their programme.
7. Students are not allowed to undertake holidays or other leaves of absence during a placement block and this cannot be arranged directly with a placement area⁴.
8. Students will not be permitted to work in placements where a conflict of interest in relation to assessment is identified.
9. Students have the responsibility to ensure they have sufficient funds to either support travel to and from placement or seek accommodation near to the placement (see below for more information)

Principles of allocation

All practice placements for nursing, midwifery, occupational therapy, operating department practice, paramedics and physiotherapy are arranged through the Practice Education Unit (PEU) in liaison with Placement Leads for the appropriate programme and placement providers. Social Work Placements are arranged by the Link Lecturers and Placement Leads. The PEU provides administrative support for placement allocation. PEU and the Placement Lead for each programme adhere to programme requirements and accommodate individual students' learning needs in a fair and transparent process. Currently the PEU deal with approximately 3,000 placement areas and/or providers across the professions. **The aim of the allocation process is to ensure fairness, appropriateness and transparency in placement allocation.** In addition the quality assurance of the practice education experience for students is monitored and reviewed.

In order to achieve **fairness, appropriateness and transparency in placement allocation**, the allocation process pays due regard to the following:

- Fairness and appropriateness to each student/cohort in allocation process,
- Placement availability,
- Risk Assessment processes
- Capacity of practice area (determined by placement provider and governed by a Practice Placement/Workplace Agreement or other capacity agreement with the University)
- Student's term time or home address and any special circumstances, which might include for example: agreed reasonable adjustments, approved extenuating circumstances
- Professional statutory regulatory body and programme requirements in relation to placement location and speciality
- Previous travel to placements
- Post allocation students can request a change of placement, if they meet the requirements to make this change, see the document: [Requesting a change in Placement Allocation](#)

⁴ Social Work students negotiate annual leave or other types of absence with the placement agency. However, any time off must be accounted for by the end of the placement.

For Paramedic students only

For Paramedic students on the BSc Paramedic Science programme please also refer to Fair and Equitable Paramedic Placement Allocation document on the following link:

<http://www.hls.brookes.ac.uk/images/pdfs/plu/paramedic-fair-and-equitable-placement-allocation.pdf>

For Social Work students only:

Social Work Placements are county wide in Oxfordshire⁵. It is mandatory for social work students to have placements in two different settings. The first placement is normally with the 'private, voluntary and independent' sector whilst the final placement is, with the 'statutory' or 'statutory' related sector.

Prior to being allocated a placement the social work student completes a Student Profile which highlights their placement preferences and any contact they or members of their close family have had with statutory services. Any disclosure would result in an interview between the student and the Placement Lead. This is important given the highly sensitive nature of placements and the requirement for students to work independently. Some students may have had social care needs that brought them into contact with social services or disabilities, which would need to be discussed.

Student Responsibilities – All programmes

To ensure that they are professional and allocated appropriately it is the student's responsibility to:

- read and understand their course placement requirements;
- ensure that they have sufficient funding available in order to be able to meet additional travel or accommodation costs associated with being in placement, regardless of whether they are fully funded, part funded or wholly self-funding. If financial difficulties are encountered then the student should seek advice from the support mechanisms available within the University. The Faculty has student support coordinators who are able to provide this information and support. Financial hardship does not constitute a reason for preferential placement allocation. Students in financial hardship are advised to seek support from <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/finance/financial-aid/>
- Provide information that will inform placement allocation on commencement of the course and update this as required in a timely manner e.g. term time address;
- Provide evidence to support their requests for any individually specific issues to be taken into consideration (e.g. occupational health reports, extenuating circumstances approval)
- arrive at placement in good time allowing sufficient travel time.

Additional Information for Pre-registration Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Operating Department Practitioner students:

Travel time to placements will vary and typically may be in the order of 1.5 hours in one direction. Longer journey times are possible and these may impact upon student and patient safety. In this situation the student is encouraged seek an alternative place to stay near placement (which would be seen as a dual accommodation).

The following links provide information regarding claiming back travel or dual accommodation expenses:

⁵ For some Social Work students it may be deemed appropriate for a placement outside Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. In these cases the student may be responsible for identifying possible placement options. However, the Link Lecturer will be responsible for Quality Assurance and agreeing the placement with the relevant service manager/ placement co-ordinator

[NHS Financial Support for Healthcare Students 2019/20 – Guidance for students Learning Support Fund](#)

[Travel-and-dual-accommodation-expenses](#)

[Travel and dual accomodation.pdf](#)

[Completing a travel and dual accommodation claim guidance pdf](#)

Additional points of note:

- **For Oxford Nursing students** who have a term time address outside of Oxfordshire, the journey time to placement will be calculated from Marston Road campus/Oxford train station as appropriate to the journey required.
- **For Swindon Nursing students** who have a term time address outside of Swindon, the journey time to placement will be calculated from the Swindon campus/Swindon train station as appropriate to the journey required.
- **For ODP students** please refer to Programme specific information.
- **For Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy students:** Additional accommodation is required for more distant placements. It is the student's responsibility to organise this for the duration of the placement. As there are financial implications associated with this second accommodation, the allocation process applies fairness across cohorts, balanced with placement availability to achieve best match whilst limiting excess financial burden. Due consideration is given to subsequent placement allocation to reduce unnecessary additional work e.g. induction, moving accommodation and reducing double accommodation requirements to all (See point links provided above to Travel/Transport)
- **For Social Work Students:**
Information regarding travel costs to placements for Social Work students can be found:

[Social Work Education in the 2019 Academic Year information for HEIs and Students](#)

[Your guide to Social Work Bursaries 2019/20 pdf](#)

Funding sponsors stipulate the region in which practice experience can be achieved for commissioned students. Social Work see footnote 5 on previous page and Placement Location Maps on the following link: [Social Work Map](#)