

Managing Student AHP Practice-based Learning Cancellations: Guidance

**NHS Education for Scotland
AHP Practice Education Programme**

Version 3: January 2018

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Version 4: December 2020 in response to COVID-19 disruption

AHP Practice Education Programme

Content Summary

This guidance introduces an escalation process to manage risks to student placement provision, also known as practice-based learning. The guidance supports Health Boards to introduce a robust approach to manage any alterations to Allied Health Profession (AHP) student practice-based learning provision in a consistent manner. This approach supports the AHP Practice-based Learning Partnership Agreements with their partner universities that host AHP pre-registration programmes. This guidance has been developed in partnership with university colleagues, AHP Directors and the NHS AHP practice education community. There may be requirement for some local interpretation of this guidance to reflect individual organisational structures, terminology and roles, however, the principles remain relevant to all settings.

The aims of the escalation process are to:

- Find efficient solutions to minimise risks to fulfilling agreed AHP student practice-based learning opportunities
- Outline responsibilities of all involved parties, including individual practice educators and their line managers
- Ensure that all necessary communication happens in a timely manner

The escalation process is recommended to be used within the context of the AHP Practice-based Learning Partnership Agreements, but will also assist with other placement experiences e.g. support worker HNC placements.

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Update December 2020

This guidance has been amended in November 2020 in response to the recovery of AHP student Practice-based Learning. The aim being to enable an organisational overview of cancellations and where possible to stabilise Practice-based Learning provision across Scotland.

Amendments were agreed through the AHP Practice-based Learning Recovery Group and the AHP Practice-based Learning Stakeholder Group, with support from the AHP Directors Scotland Group.

What is this?

This Allied Health Professions (AHPs) guidance for managing risks to practice-based learning provision within Scotland has been developed as part of the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) AHP Practice Education Programme. It aims to enrich the quality of the student learning experience and operates within the context of the Practice-based Learning Partnership Agreements. The guidance applies to both standard and elective placements.

Please note that the terms *placement* and *practice-based learning* are used interchangeably within the guidance.

Why has the guidance been developed?

This guidance has been developed in response to issues about cancellations of pre-registration AHP placements across NHS Scotland. The high level of cancellations has highlighted the need for wider local awareness of placement provision and cancellations to prevent major placement provision issues again in the future. This guidance promotes a consistent Scotland-wide approach to managing local risks of practice-based learning cancellations.

Who is this for?

The guidance is for all those involved with the provision of AHP pre-registration Practice-based Learning within NHS Scotland. This guidance was developed in partnership with university colleagues, AHP Directors and AHPs in Health Boards that have an existing practice-based learning cancellation process. Students have also provided feedback on the document.

What is a 'Cancellation'?

Within the context of this document, the term 'cancellation' is when an AHP pre-registration placement has been confirmed to be provided by a Health Board service and then the offer is withdrawn by the placement provider and the placement does not take place. If a placement is re-scheduled by the placement provider in agreement with the university, within the same academic year, then this is not considered a cancellation.

A placement requires to satisfy the needs of the Health Board, university and student. The table below presents different scenarios to help explain what is considered a placement cancellation.

Scenarios Related to Placement Cancellations

Scenario	Is this a cancellation?	Cancellation Reporting Form to be completed?
"I informed the university of when I could provide a placement. The university did not need the placement and did not accept my offer. Later on, the university asked me to provide the placement during the period that I had offered, however, I was unable to provide it."	No. The placement offer was not confirmed as being accepted.	No
"A placement was agreed to be provided in my NHS service, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within a local private sector care home. The university then accepted this placement."	No. An alternative placement within the academic year was negotiated by the placement provider. It does not matter that the placement is now provided by another organisation.	No
"A placement was agreed to be provided, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within another team later on in the academic year. The university accepted this placement."	No. An alternative placement within the academic year was offered which met the needs of the Health Board, university and student..	No
"A placement was agreed to be provided, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within another team later on in the academic year. However the university could not use this placement."	Yes. Despite an alternative placement being identified within the academic year, if the university is unable to use the newly offered placement then the originally agreed placement has changed status to a 'placement offer' which unfortunately cannot be used. Therefore the original mutually agreed placement is cancelled.	Yes
"I agreed to provide a placement. Unfortunately I required to cancel it. I was unable to find another placement within my team or in another service in the Health Board. It was then agreed with my line manager to cancel the placement."	Yes. An alternative placement was not offered within the academic year.	Yes
"A placement was agreed to be provided. The university then cancelled the placement."	This guidance does not cover this scenario. This guidance is focussed on placement providers. However, the university would record that they cancelled the placement.	No

Refunding Student's Costs Incurred Related to Placement Cancellations

The AHP Directors Scotland Group has agreed that in principle, and in rare situations where NHS Scotland Boards have to cancel or amend dates of a placement, any financial costs that have already been incurred by a student ought to be reimbursed by the NHS Board. This decision will be at the discretion of the NHS Board.

Managing AHP Placement Cancellations: Guidance

The following pages introduce the three levels of escalation, which are to be taken to manage the risk of an AHP placement being cancelled by the placement provider within NHS Scotland. Each level of escalation is initiated by a trigger, which is an identified risk to a placement being provided. The local actions and communication to be undertaken to manage the risk are then stated. If the risk cannot be addressed, then progress to the next level in the escalation process.

Three Levels of Escalation to Manage Placement Cancellations

This guidance may need local interpretation to reflect individual organisational structures, terminology, and roles. However, the principles of this guidance for managing the risks to placement provision remain relevant.

1 st Level of Escalation	
<p>Trigger - Unanticipated risk to a student placement</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Educator has to take emergency leave • Unanticipated building work/ change of premises • Staff shortages 	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University and Student
<p>1st Level Actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation (As soon as the risk is identified and where possible at least 6 weeks before placement is due to commence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Educator informs line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and local solutions to be explored. <p>Solutions to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can another Practice Educator take the student? ○ Can the placement be split with another team or a non-NHS site e.g a care home or local charity? ○ Can another Practice Educator take 2 students instead of one? ○ If appropriate, can someone from another profession take the student over the challenging period? ○ Could the student's working hours be altered to suit? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate with university about changes ➤ If unanticipated risk arises less than 2 weeks before placement is due to commence – continue to work through escalation process and inform university of risk immediately.
<pre> graph TD Q[Have above actions been processed with a successful outcome?] -- No --> A[Progress to 2nd level of escalation] Q -- Yes --> B[Inform university of any changes to structure and content of placement (if appropriate)] B --> C[Risk to placement provision removed.] </pre>	

2nd Level of Escalation	
<p>Trigger – Unable to source a local solution to student placement cancellation</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local solution not available • Alternative placement opportunity does not meet university requirements • Student unable to work out-with office hours due to caring commitments etc. 	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University and Student
<p>2nd Level actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation (where possible at least 4 weeks before placement is due to commence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Educator informs line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) of actions taken and communications with university to date • Agree plan with line manager to approach other areas within the Board/ Organisation to source an alternative placement. • Consider contacting AHP Practice Education Lead for advice/ guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact the university at the beginning of this level. To check if there are any specific placement requirements by the university, or if HEI can advise about local re-allocation e.g non-allocated placement offers. ➤ Offer another placement within the academic year to the university
<pre> graph TD Start[Have above actions been processed with a successful outcome?] -- No --> No[No] Start -- Yes --> Yes[Yes] No --> Progress[Progress to 3rd level of escalation] Progress --> End1[] Yes --> Inform[Inform university of any changes to structure and content of placement.] Inform --> Risk[Risk to placement provision removed and alternative placement offered.] </pre> <p>The flowchart starts with a decision box: "Have above actions been processed with a successful outcome?". If the answer is "No", the process moves to "Progress to 3rd level of escalation". If the answer is "Yes", the process moves to "Inform university of any changes to structure and content of placement.", which then leads to "Risk to placement provision removed and alternative placement offered."</p>	

3 rd Level of Escalation	
Trigger – Unable to source a solution within the NHS Board/ Organisation	
For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No alternative placement solution available across the organisation • Alternate placements do not meet university requirements 	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University and Student
<p>3rd Level Actions (where possible at least 3 weeks before placement is due to commence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) of actions taken and communications with university to date • Line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) may agree with the decision to cancel the placement • <i>Line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) informs AHP Director/ Lead of situation and action taken to date. Only the AHP Director/ Lead may agree and approve a placement being cancelled.</i> • Placement cancelled by line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) • Inform AHP Practice Education Lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inform university ASAP ➤ University will confirm cancellation by email to both Practice Educator & Placement Coordinator/ line manager
<p>Follow-up actions:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Practice Educator and Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) to consider the reasons for the cancellation and identify any learning to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) informs the AHP Practice Education Lead (PEL) of the cancellation. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> AHP Practice Education Lead monitors cancellations on behalf of the signatory of the AHP Practice-based Learning Partnership Agreement/ AHP Director. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> University staff will monitor cancellations throughout and academic year, and if there is a specific local change in frequency then the AHP PEL will be contacted. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> If the student has incurred a financial cost as a consequence to the cancellation, then the university will contact the AHP PEL to discuss reimbursement. </div>	

Overview of Guidance for Managing Placement Cancellations:

Trigger - Unanticipated risk to a student placement: 1st Level of Escalation Process	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University/ Student
1st Level Actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Educator informs line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and local solutions to be explored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coordinate with university about changes ➤ If unanticipated risk arises less than 2 weeks before placement is due to commence – continue to work through escalation process and inform university of risk immediately.
Trigger – Unable to source a local solution to student placement cancellation: 2nd Level of Escalation	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University/ Student
2nd Level actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Educator informs line manager / Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and agrees plan to approach other areas within the Board/ Organisation to source an alternative placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact university and check if there are any specific university placement requirements ➤ Coordinate with university ➤ Offer another placement within the academic year to the university
Trigger – Unable to source a solution within the Board/ Organisation: 3rd Level of Escalation	
Coordination within the Board/ Organisation	Coordination with the University/ Student
3rd Level Actions to Cancel Placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Only the AHP Director/ Lead may agree and approve a placement being cancelled.</i> Inform AHP Practice Education Lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inform university ASAP
<p>Follow-up actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice Educator and Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator to consider the reasons for the cancellation and identify any learning to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences. ○ Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator informs the AHP Practice Education Lead of the cancellation. ○ AHP Practice Education Lead monitors cancellations on behalf of the signatory of the AHP placement agreement. 	

Name of AHP Practice Education Lead is: X

Name of Health Board AHP Practice-based Learning Partnership Agreement Signatory is: X