

# Physiotherapy

## Supervisor Guide to Professional Experience Placement (PEP)



### Professional Experience Placement (PEP)



Putting theory into practice in a health care setting  
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2024  
School of Health Sciences  
College of Health and Medicine  
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Adapted from the original resource written and designed by Dr Linda Jaffray (Professional Experience Placement Rural Expansion Project) and John Cooper (Academic PEP Coordinator, School of Nursing) as part of the Bachelor of Nursing Professional Experience Placement Development Project at the University of Tasmania.

Photographic images by Darren Grattidge



UNIVERSITY *of*  
**TASMANIA**



The University of Tasmania would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to supporting quality Professional Experience Placement (PEP) for our School of Health Sciences (SHS) students.

Your willingness to supervise and facilitate student learning in the practice environment enables the development of a safe and skilled future healthcare workforce.

## About this Guide

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This resource is designed to support you in your learning and teaching role of students undertaking the practical or PEP components of their Master of Physiotherapy degree. The Guide is organised in two sections. The first section explains how PEP is structured within the Master of Physiotherapy course at the University of Tasmania. The second section provides guidance on the process of effective PEP supervision to enable positive learning experiences for students as they develop the necessary capabilities as a beginning-level practitioner. Across topic areas there are suggested links to further resources and more in-depth information.

If you have any suggestions or additional content for the improvement of this guide you are welcome to provide these via email to [romany.martin@utas.edu.au](mailto:romany.martin@utas.edu.au).

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# Physiotherapy

## Section 1: Professional Experience Placement (PEP) at UTAS

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# About PEP

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Professional Experience Placement or 'PEP' is a structured and formal learning experience that enables students to put theory into practice within a workplace setting. PEP, often referred to as 'prac' or 'clinical placement', has two primary objectives. Firstly, it seeks to immerse students in healthcare environments to apply and consolidate newly acquired knowledge and skills. Secondly, PEP aims to increase student understanding of the diverse roles undertaken by registered physiotherapists and other health professionals, within the Australian healthcare system.

Within PEP, students will work along-side registered physiotherapists and other healthcare professionals, contributing directly to quality client care.

PEP is a compulsory component of the Master of Physiotherapy program, with all students undertaking approximately 1000 hours of PEP within a variety of healthcare environments and Tasmanian regions.

PEP is integral to the broad experiential curriculum of the Master of Physiotherapy, which aims to graduate students as safe entry-level registered physiotherapists.

PEP is a time for students to place into context and develop, apply and extend theoretical knowledge, skills and attitudes into physiotherapy practice settings.

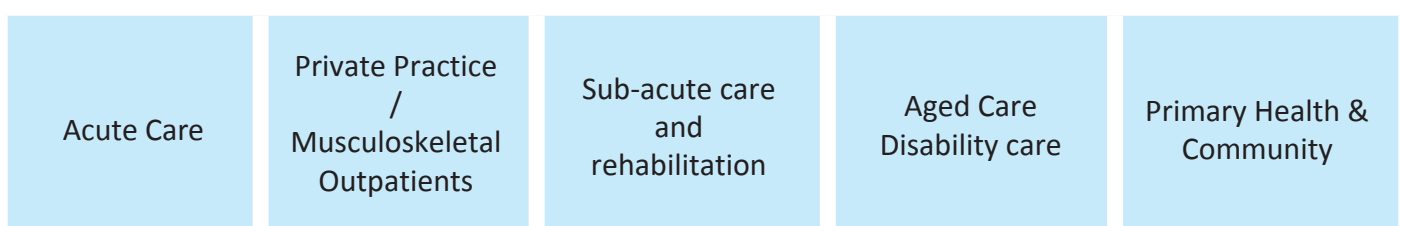
Through supported experiential learning, it is the role of supervisors to help contextualise physiotherapy practice; assist students to continually develop and put into practice the knowledge, skills and attributes requisite of entry-level physiotherapists.

Students learn and develop in PEP through:



## PEP environments and locations

To satisfy the requirements of Australian Physiotherapy Council and University course requirements, students are required to complete a range of PEP's. Typically, students undertake placements in both rural/remote and metropolitan settings across the program that include key physiotherapy areas such as:



# PEP in context of the curriculum

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The Master of Physiotherapy course at the University of Tasmania includes seven units of study that include PEP. Five units include block placements. Two units include five days of placement distributed over several weeks (CXA710 and CXA713).

Unit Code	Unit Title	Placement Model	Duration	Hours
CXA737	Physiotherapy Practice 1 - Foundations	Block	2 weeks + 2 weeks	150
CXA709	Physiotherapy Practice 2 - Musculoskeletal	Block	5 weeks	150 - 200
CXA739	Physiotherapy Practice 3 - Cardiorespiratory / Acute care	Block	5 weeks	150 - 200
CXA741	Physiotherapy Practice 4 - Neurological / Sub-acute care	Block	5 weeks	150 - 200
CXA743	Therapy Across the Lifespan and complex populations	Block	5 weeks	150
CXA710	Developing as an Allied Health Collaborator	Distributed	1 week	40
CXA713	Community-based Practice & Enterprise	Distributed	1 week	40
Total				980*

*\*Please note: Within the Master of Physiotherapy, 980 hours has been allocated to each student to take into consideration typical national and regional public holidays that occur each year over the course of the degree. The block placements in each practice unit are aligned to the national physiotherapy block placement plan.*

Throughout the physiotherapy placements, the specific expectations of students and assessment tasks to be completed during PEP are incremental. This means that each successive PEP supports the increased development and application of a discrete, but related set of skills, knowledge, and professional behaviours.

Students transition from an introductory/foundational PEP, through to demonstrating the required level of capability as a entry-level practitioner upon completion of the core placements in accordance with regulatory, legislative, and professional requirements.

For a more comprehensive understanding of expected capabilities for each PEP please see the the Developmental Indicators for each PEP.

# Key university contacts

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Within the School of Health Sciences, components of PEP are managed by the School of Health Sciences (SHS) PEP Team in accordance with University of Tasmania policies and associated College of Health and Medicine guidelines. Professional and academic staff, located in different regions of Tasmania, work to ensure each student is supported and has access to the relevant information in the lead up to, during, and following each PEP. The following information identifies key personnel and sources of information and support for supervisors.

## Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education

All elements of PEP within the School of Health Sciences have academic oversight provided by the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education. This role works closely with all members of the PEP team to ensure each student receives a quality placement experience in accordance with program and unit requirements. The Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education for the School of Health Sciences is Dr Romany Martin; [romany.martin@utas.edu.au](mailto:romany.martin@utas.edu.au)

PEP compliance, placement allocations, and general PEP queries should be directed to the:

SHS PEP Team  
[Tasmania.Placements@utas.edu.au](mailto:Tasmania.Placements@utas.edu.au)

## PEP Unit Coordinator

Each PEP is situated in a unit that has a dedicated Unit Coordinator who provides oversight for managing all aspects of learning and teaching, including placement. You will be advised who the PEP Unit Coordinator is for each placement.



Student Accommodation and Financial Support Assistance. For information students should be advised to contact [CRH.Accommodation@utas.edu.au](mailto:CRH.Accommodation@utas.edu.au) or phone +61 3 6324 4012.

Student Counselling Services. Information about student counselling services can be found on the University website [www.utas.edu.au/students/shw/counselling](http://www.utas.edu.au/students/shw/counselling).



# Resources and training

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The School of Health Sciences provides varied learning events and workshops to support supervisors. Keep your eye on the PEP Website for upcoming events:

In addition, there is a wealth of online resources and training relevant to supervision and facilitation of student PEP and work integrated learning. Please see the following for a place to start:



## Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice Education

[www.appeducation.com.au](http://www.appeducation.com.au)



## SUPPORTING HEALTH STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

[www.supportingstudents.org.au](http://www.supportingstudents.org.au)



WPL: Get Engaged!

[acen.edu.au/workplace-learning-get-engaged/](http://acen.edu.au/workplace-learning-get-engaged/)



[acen.edu.au](http://acen.edu.au)



## The National Association of Field Experience Administrators Inc.

[nafea.org.au](http://nafea.org.au)



[www.clinedaus.org.au](http://www.clinedaus.org.au)



[www.heti.nsw.gov.au/  
Placements- Scholarships-  
Grants/clinical- placements/  
clinical-placement- resources/  
clinical-supervision-](http://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/Placements-Scholarships-Grants/clinical-placements/clinical-placement-resources/clinical-supervision-)



[globalwil.org](http://globalwil.org)

# PEP processes

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The University of Tasmania must ensure the safety of students, staff, and the broader community through completion of all mandatory legislative, regulatory, placement partner and university requirements.

The School of Health Sciences PEP programs are governed by the University's Professional Experience Placement Policy and a suite of process documents written and maintained by the College of Health and Medicine to guide students and stakeholders pre, during and post PEP.

Links to these documents are located under the 'compliance' and 'PEP Processes' tabs on the PEP Website [www.utas.edu.au/health/professional-experience-placement](http://www.utas.edu.au/health/professional-experience-placement).

The following section provides an overview of student requirements related to compliance, professional standards, mandatory functional requirements and general PEP guidelines.

## Student compliance

Participation in PEP is conditional on students completing and maintaining all mandatory compliance requirements set out in the School of Health Sciences Student Compliance section on the [PEP website](#).

The mandatory compliance requirements include:

- ✓ Safety in Practice Agreement
- ✓ Health Assessment (if required)
- ✓ National Police Record Check Certificate
- ✓ Working with vulnerable people (children) registration
- ✓ Immunisation Record (infectious disease and immunisation status)
- ✓ Manual Handling
- ✓ First Aid and Basic Life Support (BLS)
- ✓ Hand Hygiene
- ✓ Any specific placement partner requirements (as advised).

## Professional standards

Upon enrolment into the Master of Physiotherapy course, each student is automatically enrolled on the student physiotherapy register with AHPRA. As such, students are expected to conduct themselves and practice in accordance with the registration standards, codes of professional and ethical conduct and guidelines that govern safe and effective physiotherapy practice in Australia as outlined in the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015.

## Mandatory functional requirements

All students are required to establish and maintain their medical, physical and psychological capacity to practise safely, inclusive of:

### 1. Reading, writing and numeracy

- accurately read and comprehend patient charts and medication labels
- accurately calculate medication dosages, and
- accurately record in client notes.

### 2. Critical thinking and analysis

- critically self-evaluate and reflect upon own practice, feelings and beliefs and the consequences of these for individuals and groups.

### 3. Communication

- accept instruction and professional criticism
- question instructions and decisions which are unclear, and
- resolve conflict and negotiate with staff and patients
- accurately and appropriately communicate with patients, relatives, and all member of the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

### 4. Psychological

- interact with patients and their families, others in a caring, respectful manner to provide social, emotional, and culturally sensitive support and health education, and
- maintain self-control in professional situations.

### 5. Physical

- understand, maintain, and program technical equipment, which including having the dexterity to handle and manipulate items related directly related to patient care
- physically support clients, including wound management and administering BLS, and
- physically manage essential equipment and materials.

## General guidelines for students in practice

The following general guidelines are communicated to students as part of their preparation for PEP, and are provided here for your information:

<b>Students as supernumerary</b>	A student must not be substituted for an employee at any time and they cannot be counted as a usual member of staff.
<b>Name badges</b>	Students must always wear their name badge. Name must be bold and displayed in a prominent place unless this contravenes Healthcare Agency policy.
<b>Uniform requirements</b>	<p>All students attending PEP are required to adhere to all uniform and personal presentation requirements as detailed below: *please note these may be subject to change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short-sleeved University of Tasmania Polo shirt (Arms are to be 'bare below the elbows' for infection control purposes).</li><li>• Plain navy-blue or black trousers, tailored shorts, culottes or skirt</li><li>• Black or navy-blue flat soled shoes/joggers (Feet must be fully enclosed for safety, no ballet flats or similar)</li><li>• Student ID (The UTAS student photo ID card)</li><li>• University of Tasmania branded fleece vest (if required)</li><li>• Navy-blue cardigan, jacket or jumper (if required).</li></ul>
<b>Presenting relevant documentation</b>	A placement provider may request to view a student's compliance documentation at any stage during PEP. Therefore, students are instructed to ensure they always have accessible copies.
<b>Student scope of practice</b>	To determine scope of practice of our physiotherapy students refer to the specific unit outlines for the appropriate PEP allocation and the 'Physiotherapy Student Developmental Indicators for PEP'. Students' scope of practice may also be influenced by placement provider policies and procedures.

## Informed consent

Prior to all forms of direct client care, students are required to obtain the client's informed consent. In semester one, year one students learn about their legal, professional and ethical responsibilities as a student physiotherapist. Before the first placement, students will have knowledge of material risk, effective communication and the three conditions that make consent legally and ethically valid, which are consent is:

1. Based on adequate information
2. By a person with decision-making capacity
3. Given voluntarily

## PEP attendance

Any student absences from PEP must be recorded to facilitate the monitoring and management of outstanding PEP hours. Outstanding PEP hours maybe required to be completed at a later point and are organised on an individual basis and at the discretion of the relevant placement facility and the School of Health Sciences. In some cases, students may have to undertake additional PEP hours in a subsequent PEP.

Recurrent or extended absence from PEP for any reason, including illness or extenuating circumstances, may mean the student will be required to repeat the PEP unit of study.

## Recording PEP absences

The attendance requirement for PEP is set at 100% to ensure that students have optimum exposure to the learning environment to meet the necessary expectations against the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. In the event a student is absent they must undertake the following:

- notify the placement facility prior to the commencement of the shift to be missed
- notify the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education
- log absence in PEP Workbook (if using) and have this signed by their supervising Physiotherapist.

## Private work commitments and PEP

Students who undertake paid employment are advised that attendance and performance in PEP must take precedence over their work commitments. Wherever possible, work commitments should be cleared for the duration of the PEP.

- A typical week of PEP consists of 38 to 40 hours. Start/finish times and shift patterns vary between placement facilities
- The provision of rosters in advance of PEP is at the discretion of each placement provider and is not managed by the PEP team. Students are expected to attend PEP as per the roster provided by the placement provider.
- Students are to identify current or perceived conflicts of interest related to placements in specific healthcare facilities.

## Work, health and safety information during PEP

All students are required to be familiar with the Work, Health and Safety information. In the event that a student has an incident, accident or injury while on PEP, they must follow the incident/injury/accident reporting procedures within the particular workplace and ensure the incident/injury/accident has been reported as soon as practicable to the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education and Unit Coordinator.

The student must also complete a University of Tasmania Online 'My Safety' Incident Notification, <https://www.utas.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing/mysafety>. When accessing the notification for the first time, students will need to login on the University 'Sign In' page, which will come up first. If students have any questions, they can email [health.safety@utas.edu.au](mailto:health.safety@utas.edu.au) and seek support from the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education to complete this form. Once submitted, the form will be forwarded to the relevant School of Health Sciences safety representative for review and follow-up.

## Student feedback

We are committed to resolving any concerns or issues raised by School of Health Sciences students during placement as soon as possible and in collaboration with the placement agency. Following PEP, students receive a Professional Experience Placement Survey from the College of Health and Medicine. This anonymous, non-compulsory survey seeks to capture student feedback centered around learning and teaching. This information is used as a continuous quality improvement activity to improve PEP resources and information, supervisor education and further inform the Master of Physiotherapy curriculum.

# Supervision and assessment

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'Scope of Practice' refers to the physiotherapy activities a health practitioner can undertake in line with their educational preparation, clinical skill capability and in accordance with organisational and regulatory requirements. Every health professional (inclusive of student physiotherapists) has a professional responsibility to work within the limits of their scope of practice.

As students' progress through the MPT they acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes and each PEP provides the avenue to consolidate and safely increase their scope of practice. It is important that students have opportunities to develop into entry-level practitioners in a well-supported and safe environment, maintaining their duty of care to other health professionals and the public. Over the course of their study program, a student's scope of practice will broaden under the guidance, supervision, and delegation of the registered physiotherapists, with whom students practise along-side during PEP.

## Delegation within scope of practice

Decisions around scope of practice is a collaborative process and is ultimately at the discretion of the supervising registered physiotherapist. Therefore, supervisors often ask questions to determine a student's level of preparation and experience to ensure they are able to delegate tasks safely within an individual's scope of practice at that time. As students proceed through their degree, they are encouraged to consider, review and refine what is within their individual scope of practice, and to share what knowledge and skills they have been exposed to in the lead up to placement with their supervisors. Prior to each PEP, students receive information regarding managing and maintaining their scope of practice.

## Models of supervision

During PEP, all physiotherapy students are supervised and supported in their learning by a registered physiotherapist who will mentor and guide them to expand their developing capability in practice. Whilst supervision of students in PEP always involves a registered physiotherapist, models of supervision can differ slightly from one placement facility to another. Typically, this is facilitated via two models:

### ***Supervisor model***

In this model, students work alongside a supervisor (sometimes also referred to as a supervising physiotherapist), on a daily basis within the placement facility as they provide care for clients. While engaging in professional practice, supervisors will provide supervision, feedback and support student learning and achievements during PEP.

### ***Educator model (Clinical Educators)***

In addition to the supervisor model outlined above, some placement facilities employ clinical educators to support student learning on PEP. Clinical Educators are the terms predominantly used in acute care environments and community health, to describe physiotherapists who work in a supernumerary capacity (i.e. no client allocation) to support both students and their supervisors during the PEP

## Direct and indirect supervision

All students must be appropriately supervised in practice, which involves a mix of both direct and indirect supervision relative to the individual student's capability, scope of practice and the incremental expectations of each PEP they are undertaking.

The Physiotherapy Board of Australia defines direct and indirect supervision as follows:

<b>Direct supervision</b>	The supervisor is physically present on the premises when the student physiotherapist under supervision provides clinical care, to observe and work with the client under supervision.
<b>Student feedback</b>	The supervisor is easily contactable and is available when needed to observe and discuss clinical management with the student physiotherapist under supervision in the presence of the client.

When a student first enters the healthcare environment, they will initially be directly supervised for all activities. As students' progress through the degree and their scope of practice increases, they generally require less direct supervision and can perform many activities under indirect supervision. As the supervising physiotherapists within the placement facility gain confidence in the student's capabilities, the level of supervision is adjusted accordingly. The Developmental Indicators for each PEP outline our suggestions for the degree of supervision required for each placement.



## Assessment - APP

At two points during a student's PEP, a formal review is completed using the Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP) tool. The first review occurs at the midway point (Interim Review) and the second review (Final Review) occurs at the end of each placement. These reviews are designed to provide feedback and formally acknowledge and document a student's performance and progression against the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia.

Each review consists of three components:

1. Student Self-assessment
2. Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP)
3. Assessor Feedback

### 1. Student self-assessment

Students are required to grade their overall performance and consider where they need to focus their learning, and do this by marking themselves against the APP. This is in preparation for the next stage of the review where students are required to be assessed against the APP through a formal discussion with their supervising physiotherapist. It is important for students to be reflective at this stage and consider what additional guidance or assistance may be required to achieve the goals of PEP and discuss this with their supervisor.

### 2. Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP)

Students are assessed during PEP against the Physiotherapy practice thresholds for Australia using the Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP) tool. The APP is a scoring tool that outlines performance domains expected of a registered physiotherapist. There are 7 domains (Professional Behaviour, Communication, Assessment, Analysis & Planning, Intervention, Evidence-based Practice, Risk Management) with a total of 20 individual assessable items. Each item is scored using a numerical scale from 0 – 4. Students will be familiar with the APP tool prior to commencing PEP, including the performance indicators for each domain. The performance indicators provide information on the minimum competency standards for Physiotherapy practice in Australia. The APP is also a useful guide to support goal-setting activities.

The APP tool is completed during or after a formal discussion between the supervising physiotherapist and the student. The supervising and the student reflect on feedback provided to date, direct observations of student practice and evidence provided by the student as part of their self-assessment activities prior to the review being undertaken. As the discussion progresses, the student will be measured using the following numerical scale:

Score	Standard of performance
0	Infrequently/rarely demonstrates performance indicators
1	Demonstrates few performance indicators to an adequate standard
2	Demonstrates most performance indicators to an adequate standard
3	Demonstrates most performance indicators to a good standard
4	Demonstrates most performance indicators to an excellent standard
NA	Not assessed = item was not assessed

A student who scores a 2 for an item has demonstrated practice at a beginning practitioner (entry-level) grade with respect to that item on the APP.

- ✓ demonstrating most performance indicators to an adequate and safe standard,
- ✓ occasional support cues required, and
- ✓ meeting this standard regardless of their experience, place in the course, or length of placement.

A score of '0' or '1' indicates that minimum acceptable competency as a registered Physiotherapist has not been achieved. An unsatisfactory result and feedback will be provided to the student to guide learning. Failure to achieve 2 or higher by the final review may result in a fail result for PEP for that unit of study. The supervising physiotherapist will sign-off on the APP review.

### **3. Assessor feedback**

This is completed by both the supervisor and the student. During this session, the supervisor provides a summary of review and outlines any areas of learning that needs further development moving forward, with students having the opportunity to add any additional comments. This form is required to be signed by the student.

Outstanding PEP is required to be completed at a later point and is organised on an individual basis and at the discretion of the relevant placement facility and the School of Health Sciences. In some cases, students may have to undertake additional PEP in a subsequent PEP rotation.

Recurrent or extended absence from PEP for any reason, including illness or extenuating circumstances, may mean the student will be required to repeat the PEP unit of study.

# Physiotherapy



## Section 2: Effective PEP Supervision

A brief guide and  
collection of helpful hints

# Overview of resources

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This section includes information on different aspects of enhancing the PEP learning and teaching experience, as well as managing any challenges that may present. It addresses common questions we receive from the practice environment, provides helpful hints and suggestions, and offers links to more in-depth information and resources, should these be required.

For those who have been involved in supervising or facilitating student PEP we hope these resources will complement your existing approach, knowledge, and skills.

For those who haven't previously been involved in the supervision or facilitation of students, and who may be uncertain about stepping into this role, it is our hope that these resources will inspire confidence and a willingness to contribute to student learning in PEP.

Some supervisors may initially feel some hesitation in doing so and commonly underestimate or second-guess their capacity to supervise or facilitate students effectively. However, if you are an effective communicator, have an interest in teaching, sharing your practice wisdom and playing an active part in developing our future health workforce, your contribution in the PEP space would be incredibly valuable.

## This section contains information on:

- Supervisor approach and key attributes
- Factors underpinning high quality PEP
- Before PEP: Preparing for student placements
- During PEP: Student welcome and orientation
- During PEP: Interprofessional Learning (IPL)
- During PEP: Navigating challenges
- During PEP: Conflict resolution
- After PEP: Self care, professional development and support

**Access The Learning Guide:** [A Handbook for allied health professionals facilitating learning in the workplace](#) for information on:

- Understanding learning in the workplace
- Understanding the adult learner
- Skills for facilitating learning
  - Building relationships and communicating
  - The learning continuum and skill acquisition
  - Facilitating reflective practice
  - Facilitating clinical reasoning
  - Facilitating evidence-based practice
  - Giving feedback and managing challenging behaviour
  - Where and how to facilitate learning in the workplace

An additional resource to develop your clinical supervision skills

- ENABLING CLINICAL SUPERVISION SKILLS (ECSS).  
Available at: [https://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/428584/Enabling-Clinical-Supervision-Skills.pdf](https://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/428584/Enabling-Clinical-Supervision-Skills.pdf)

# Supervisor approach & key attributes

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## KEY MESSAGES

The approach adopted by supervisors to learning and teaching in healthcare environments is critical to shaping quality placement experiences.

In addition to teaching and clinical skills, effective supervisors demonstrate a willingness to share accumulated practice experience, knowledge and skills and bring varied personal and professional attributes to their role.

Important attributes include emotional intelligence, an interest in supporting student learning and development, role modelling professional behaviour, being organised, clear on their role and responsibilities, open-minded, and insightful personally and professionally.

## The PROFESSIONAL FACILITATOR acronym articulates key elements for effective

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>P</b>rofessional role model</li><li><b>R</b>esponsible</li><li><b>O</b>bligations are understood</li><li><b>F</b>ocused on developing new professionals</li><li><b>E</b>ngaged in learning and teaching</li><li><b>S</b>ensitive to diversity</li><li><b>S</b>ource of information for students</li><li><b>I</b>nsightful of self as a person and a professional</li><li><b>O</b>pen minded and tolerant</li><li><b>N</b>urtures growth and confidence</li><li><b>A</b>ccesses research and shares clinical expertise</li><li><b>L</b>iaises with all stakeholders</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>F</b>eedback on performance is constructive</li><li><b>A</b>ssessment is applicable to student learning</li><li><b>C</b>redible and current professional experience</li><li><b>I</b>ntelligent emotionally</li><li><b>L</b>earning opportunities meet course requirements</li><li><b>I</b>nterpersonal communication skills</li><li><b>T</b>echnically competent and safe</li><li><b>A</b>ccountable to the profession, student and self</li><li><b>T</b>each the physiotherapy professional experience</li><li><b>O</b>rganised as professional and role model</li><li><b>R</b>eflective as practitioner and teacher</li></ul> |
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*You may like to reflect on the people who have supported your professional and personal development throughout your career. What did you value most about their approach?*

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*Write down the unique skills, experience, attributes, and approach that you bring to your supervisory role in student PEP.*

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## KEY MESSAGES

Enabling high-quality PEP is a collective responsibility. Students, university staff, supervisors and other staff within healthcare agencies all play varied and important roles in cultivating valuable placement experiences.

The framework to support assurance on institution-wide quality in Work Integrated Learning guides the School of Health Sciences thinking about, assessing and improving factors that underpin high quality PEP.

Historically, definitions of what constitutes 'quality' have been vague. However recent research has enabled more nuanced understanding about the specific factors underpinning 'quality' in PEP. Having a shared understanding of these elements enables greater collaboration to identify, argue for and bolster the factors that support quality placements The School of Health Sciences understands PEP to be a form of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). WIL is defined as:

a pedagogical practice, is a complex interaction of student learning in, and through, partnership with industry, community, business, and the university. This framework has been developed based on a definition of WIL as student experiences of work within curriculum, undertaken in partnership, through engagement with authentic and genuine activities for the industry, business or community partner, which are assessed (Campbell et al, 2019)

**A framework for assuring quality in Work Integrated Learning** (Campbell et al,2019) provides an understanding of WIL practice that is situated in an evidence-based framework (table 1) developed to reflect intersections of four domains of practice (student experience, curriculum design, institutional requirements, stakeholder engagement) (Sachs, Rowe, and Wilson, 2016), experienced across three temporal phases (before, during and after) of a WIL experience (Billett, 2011).

<b>DOMAINS</b>	<b>Student Experience</b>	<b>Curriculum Design</b>	<b>Institutional Requirements</b>	<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>
<b>Guiding principle</b>	A quality WIL experience should provide students with a scaffolded, connected and supported pedagogical experience.	A quality WIL curriculum should contain embedded, accessible and transformative learning and assessment within an intended and enacted curriculum.	Quality WIL activity across institutions should be evidenced by the proper management of staff, risk management and reporting around WIL experiences supporting continual improvement.	Quality WIL experiences are supported by engagement, connection and responsiveness to the dynamic expectations of diverse stakeholders (industry, community, government, higher education sector, professional bodies, students).
<b>Before</b>	<p><b>Standard 1.1</b> Ensure student readiness and preparation for learning in the workplace context</p> <p><b>Standard 1.2</b> Student WIL experiences are connected to prior and future learning and work</p> <p><b>Standard 1.3</b> Student WIL experiences align with their learning goals and capabilities</p>	<p><b>Standard 2.1</b> WIL experiences are embedded through a whole-of-qualification curriculum design underpinned by current research and scholarship</p> <p><b>Standard 2.2</b> Students and industry are partners in the design of WIL curriculum</p>	<p><b>Standard 3.1</b> Institutions have shared goals, policies, principles and values about WIL</p> <p><b>Standard 3.2</b> Institutions have identifiable leadership and governance structures for WIL</p> <p><b>Standard 3.3</b> WIL is supported by adequate and effective IT and administrative systems</p>	<p><b>Standard 4.1</b> Diverse stakeholders are active participants across WIL activities</p> <p><b>Standard 4.2</b> Partner sites are reviewed for health and safety, and suitability for WIL activities</p>
<b>During</b>	<p><b>Standard 1.4</b> Student WIL experiences are safe and supportive</p> <p><b>Standard 1.5</b> Student WIL experiences offer scaffolded learning opportunities</p> <p><b>Standard 1.6</b> Support and guidance is provided for students within the WIL experience</p>	<p><b>Standard 2.3</b> WIL curriculum design reflects professional accreditation requirements and ongoing career and employability development</p> <p><b>Standard 2.4</b> WIL curriculum design provides inclusive, equitable and accessible experiences</p> <p><b>Standard 2.5</b> WIL assessment design is supported by authentic tasks, aligned with learning goals and graduate outcomes</p>	<p><b>Standard 3.4</b> Institutions provide targeted professional development for academic and professional staff, and industry and community partners</p> <p><b>Standard 3.5</b> Enacted legal and risk management frameworks, compliance procedures and processes</p>	<p><b>Standard 4.3</b> Institution has effective policies and procedures in place for ongoing quality assurance of stakeholders including partner agreements, financial arrangements, and supervision quality</p> <p><b>Standard 4.4</b> Institutions undertake site contact and stakeholder communication</p> <p><b>Standard 4.5</b> Effective and sustainable relationship management including appropriate communication, reward and recognition</p>
<b>After</b>	<b>Standard 1.7</b> Students receive, use, and provide feedback on WIL experience to ensure progress towards learning goals	<p><b>Standard 2.6</b> Student learning gains are measurable against intended outcomes</p> <p><b>Standard 2.7</b> Benchmarking of WIL assessment and identification of areas for improvement</p>	<p><b>Standard 3.6</b> Provision of funding, resourcing, support, and recognition necessary to achieve WIL strategic goals</p> <p><b>Standard 3.7</b> Evaluation and tracking of short to long term WIL outcomes for continuous quality improvement</p>	<b>Standard 4.6</b> Partnership arrangements are regularly reviewed

Source: Campbell et al, (2019)

# Before PEP: Preparing for student placements

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## KEY MESSAGES

Facilitating or providing supervision to students during PEP is a significant investment, involving your time, personal and professional resources and the juggling of other work demands and responsibilities.

Having time and space to think about and prepare for each student PEP allocation will help shape a quality learning and teaching experience for students, yourselves, and other team members.

Core elements of effective preparation include accessing timely PEP allocation information, team consultation and communication, reviewing the student learning literature and assessment requirements, and establishing a plan for welcoming and orientating students to the practice environment.

There is no prescribed way of preparing for PEP. You will likely have developed your own process over time. The specific PEP preparation tasks and time frames will also vary depending on your role and your healthcare setting.

However, common elements of PEP preparation include:

- gaining timely access to information specific to each PEP allocation such as how many students, their names and contact details, as well as the specific practice unit, to calibrate expectations of student activity;
- ensuring your organisation and key team members are provided with timely information about the upcoming PEP allocation and establishing a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities regarding student supervision and support;
- becoming acquainted with, or refreshing your foundational knowledge about student learning styles, student-centred teaching, and the clinical reasoning cycle, which will help ground you in the learning and teaching space; and
- establishing and / or continuing to refine a process of welcoming and orientating students to your organisation and facilitating a sense of belonging in the practice environment for the duration of their placement.

The template on the following page may support you in your planning.



## PEP Planning Template

Timing	Date	Pre-placement Planning Actions	Person Responsible
4-6 weeks prior to PEP			
2 weeks prior to PEP			
1 week prior to PEP			
Day before PEP			
Student arrival			

# During PEP: Student welcome and orientation

## KEY MESSAGES

Positive placement experiences begin with students feeling welcomed, receiving an appropriate agency orientation, and being included in the practice environment.

Key actions for fostering student understanding and sense of belonging in a new environment include:

- cultivating a welcoming environment and establishing respectful relationships
- getting to know students as individuals
- setting clear expectations and
- providing a thorough orientation or introduction to the placement setting.

The first day of PEP is an exciting one for students, however, they may also be overwhelmed, anxious and/or shy. There are several things you can do to support students' entry into the practice environment.

### **Welcoming and facilitating relationships:**

Students quickly sense whether they are welcomed or regarded as an impost. Their sense of 'belonging' is a crucial factor in how they subsequently engage and benefit from the experience, particularly when they are in the early phases of their study journey. Encourage all staff to be welcoming of students and creating a supportive learning environment. Introduce yourself, your background, role and interest in physiotherapy education and support. Introduce the students and the healthcare staff and support the building of positive, respectful relationships. Encourage connection with and interprofessional learning from students and staff from diverse health disciplines.

### **Getting to know students:**

Getting to know each student as an individual and taking time to understand their placement goals is helpful. Ask about their background, previous experiences in the profession, and why they want to be a physiotherapist. These questions help you locate the student in the context of their lives and influences. Be attentive to the factors in their life that may influence their practice experience, including caregiving responsibilities that may inform shift requests. Establish different students' preferred learning style to guide communication and teaching methods. Observing whether students 'hang-back', show initiative and 'step-forward' or are over-confident for their level of experience and 'barge right in' will provide insight into their interpersonal skills and level of confidence.

## **Clear expectations and boundaries:**

It is important to establish clear expectations and boundaries for students early in the placement. Make your expectations clear in terms of: start, finish and break times, social media use and confidentiality, professional respect, punctuality, appropriate attire, scope of practice, procedure for notifying placement absence, the student role in emergency events, and writing case notes in client histories. Ask the student about their expectations of supervisors to ensure they are reasonable.

Orientation to the practice environment: Providing timely and relevant information about the practice environment empowers student learning and sense of belonging. Consider providing information on the following:

- your facility (conduct a tour identifying the location of toilets, kitchen, cafeteria, where to keep valuables, parking arrangements and costs)
- supervision arrangements & workday organisation
- process for providing informal and formal feedback
- emergency codes and procedures
- infection control and hand hygiene requirements
- relevant workplace policies & procedures
- scheduled meetings and training sessions
- contact details for who to contact in what circumstances

The following checklist provides a more detailed orientation day guide.

## ORIENTATION DAY CHECKLIST: COMMON ELEMENTS

- **Welcome and plan for the day**
- **Student introductions** (*name, background, work experience, previous placements, place of residence*)
- **Introduce yourself, your professional experience** (*years and practice areas*), and your role (*you may wish to share why you have an interest in supporting student PEP*)
- **Provide relevant contact details for who to contact in what circumstances** (*for example if unable to attend PEP, having to leave early*)
- **Discuss expectations of students and professional issues, which may include:**
  - punctuality, start, finish and break times
  - social media use, confidentiality and writing case notes in client histories
  - respect for staff and patients
  - knowledge of and adherence to legal requirements
  - procedure for notifying placement absence
- **Discuss student expectations of supervisors**
  - Find out about, and where necessary, calibrate student expectations of supervisors / facilitators and the practice setting
  - Discuss supervision arrangements & workday organisation
  - Provision of informal and formal feedback and debriefing sessions
  - Discuss completion of the PEP workbook (if using)
  - Convey understanding of student learning objectives
  - Plan for placement: including client care responsibilities, and how you will be working with students one-to-one or in small groups
- **Provide placement-site specific information**
  - Rosters and shift changes.
  - Emergency codes, Medical Emergency Team (MET) call and student role in emergency events
  - Infection control and hand hygiene requirements
  - Other relevant organisational policies and procedures
  - Meetings and training sessions
- **Provide tour of the facility**
  - Confirm the plan for the remainder of the day.
  -

# During PEP: Interprofessional Learning (IPL)

## KEY MESSAGES

Interprofessional Learning (IPL) involves individuals from different health professions learning 'with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care' (Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE), 2002).

Involving students in IPL during PEP is critical to cultivating interprofessional respect and understanding early in their career and underpins the provision of effective, collaborative health care.

IPL can be embedded into daily health care activity, as opposed to being an additional, elaborate or time intensive undertaking.

Consider involving students in shared workplace debriefs or structured observations of different disciplines in practice. Multidisciplinary team meetings, intake or assessments, case reviews, family meetings, discharge planning meetings all provide organic opportunities for interprofessional learning.

### Principles of IPL

IPL is founded on the principles of life-long, adult learning, respectful interprofessional communication, teamwork and collaboration, mutual learning and acknowledgement of the diverse roles, knowledge and skills of different professions in the service of providing safe and effective patient care.

### Different IPL opportunities

There are a range of different IPL activities that you may consider supporting students to engage in, whilst on PEP, many of which occur naturally in the healthcare environment.

### Interprofessional education sessions

Students across disciplines can attend in-service education sessions on topics with shared relevance (de-escalating patient aggression, guardianship and administration issues, grief and loss, conducting a family conference).

### Community engagement activities and health career forums

Interprofessional learning can be facilitated through multidiscipline student engagement in community engagement events such as Agfest, Health Career Forums, School-based Community Engagement Programs and Health Expos.

### Simulated IPL and case studies

Throughout their studies, students have been completing clinical case studies using clinical reasoning. Some aspects of the clinical case studies have included interprofessional learning opportunities.

### Shared workplace debrief

Students from different disciplines come together to critically reflect on a shared interprofessional event involving the planning, discussion or delivery of patient / client care. Elements of collaborative care, such as communication, leadership, power, conflict and the focus of care are critiqued. Examples of interprofessional practices could include a multidisciplinary team meeting, case conference, clinical handover meeting, or discharge planning activity.

### Structured observation of disciplines in practice

Students engage in a structured observation of staff or students from a different discipline planning, discussing, or providing care. For example, observing an initial assessment, patient education session, attending a case review or discharge planning meeting. Students are guided to reflect on the interaction, patient experience and engagement, noting the actions, knowledge and skills of the professional, goals and outcomes of the interaction, differences and similarities to their own profession.

# During PEP: Navigating challenges

## KEY MESSAGES

Overall, supervisors and students enjoy positive experiences of PEP. However, when supervising students challenges may present from time to time and it is important that you feel supported to respond effectively. As an overview:

- identify difficulties or challenges early, even if minor, to avoid escalation,
- choose an appropriate time and location to engage the student in conversation,
- model professional behaviour to communicate the issue respectfully, but clearly,
- provide specific feedback on what you / others are observing,
- use active listening skills to understand underlying reasons for behaviour or attitudes,
- determine required change / outcomes from the conversation and the support, resources, or information to enable these,
- seek the support of the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education at any point for information and support

Students tend to look forward to being in the practice environment and putting theory into action. However, undertaking PEP can also be challenging for them and this can give rise to behaviour, attitudes and approaches that may have implications for their progression and assessment in PEP. Below are examples of challenging situations with suggestions on how to manage these. However, each situation is unique, therefore you may need to seek advice to address your specific situation.

## The over-confident or shy, introverted student

A student may compare their level of knowledge and skills to professionals who have been in practice for many years, and in doing so, can experience a lack of confidence in their own ability. They may present as shy or introverted, unwilling to 'speak up' when interacting with staff, clients or their peers. Students can benefit from knowing that this is commonly experienced by novice learners. To demonstrate the ability to gain and apply new skills and knowledge, and be safe in practice, students must however find their voice and display increasing confidence. Encourage them to put their emerging knowledge and skills into practice and provide appropriate learning activities in line with their scope of practice. Encourage students to observe and learn from those more experienced and to reflect at the end of each shift on something new that they learnt or practised. If this issue continues for extended periods, it will need to be addressed with the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education.

Other students may present as over-confident or be resistant to feedback. Building student confidence in their growing knowledge, skills and attributes is an overall aim of their development, however these attributes need to be proportionate to their level of study, experience, and scope of practice. If you are concerned about a student, gain the perspectives of different staff members and ascertain the specific occasions in which this attribute has been observed. If you determine there is a problem, arrange to speak with the student, explain what has been observed and its implications, determine any underlying factors (overcompensating for insecurities, fear of, or trying to please staff). Document this process and contact the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education.

## Students who present as disinterested or disengaged

If you, or others, identify students who seem disengaged or portray a perceived lack of interest whilst on PEP, it is important to talk with the student about this early. Communicate your observations and explore the underlying reason for this behaviour. They may feel overwhelmed, unsupported or lack confidence in their ability. They may feel that they are not being challenged or not given enough opportunity to learn. Sometimes students can overestimate their ability, have unrealistic expectations of placement or have unhelpful biases or mindsets about specific types of health care settings and overlook the learning opportunities available to them. This is often a good opportunity to revisit goals and expectations and adjust accordingly. Sometimes students have difficulty, due to different learning styles or because of personal / family stress. Whatever the source, it is important to provide feedback to students on observed disengagement and build strategies to resolve this issue. Students have a responsibility to be an active professional contributor to positive, quality placement experiences.

## Uncertainty about workplace requirements

Sometimes students are unsure about how workplace requirements impact them as student learners on PEP. It is useful to remind them of your workplace code of conduct and explain that whilst they are supernumerary (not considered staff) there are certain requirements and expectations while they are learning in the facility.

One example may be students arriving late or leaving early from shifts whilst on PEP. If this occurs it is important to speak to them about it as early as possible. Explain that you have, or others have observed them arriving late / leaving early and enquire about why this has been occurring. There may be an explanation and the opportunity to support the student to problem solve and work out ways to fulfill their required hours.

Professional behaviour and the importance of punctuality should be emphasised. Students should also be reminded that being late or leaving the healthcare environment early will also jeopardise their progress, as specific hours are required for successful completion of PEP and for obtaining registration. If this issue is not resolved the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education should be informed as soon as possible.

## Student progression

Student progression and passing PEP is contingent on their ability to demonstrate safe practice, professional attitudes and behaviours, as outlined in the Physiotherapy Practice Threshold Standards and calibrated to their PEP subject. If you identify any issues that will impact student progression or passing their PEP, including behaviour and attitudes outlined previously, it is important to name these up and seek resolution of these issues in a timely manner. Concerns regarding student progression need to be communicated to the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education as soon as possible so support and direction can be provided to yourself as the facilitator or supervisor, as well as the student.

Most students rise to the challenges of PEP by listening, accommodating feedback provided and displaying increased confidence and capability throughout their placement. However, there are occasions in which students may not progress satisfactorily or moderate their behaviour in response to feedback. Supervisors can feel uncertain and concerned about how to manage this situation. In these situations, identify issues early and work with the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education and the student to offer clear feedback, support and processes. All students have a learning plan, and you can encourage them to revisit it to build in your specific feedback and identify strategies that will assist their development.

It is important to note that the final decision on whether a student passes or fails a PEP rests with the School of Health Sciences and ultimately the student will have their result confirmed upon release of exam results at the end of each semester. During PEP, you are making a professional recommendation, based on observation and evidence as to how and to what affect a student has performed against the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. In the event of the student being unable or unwilling to demonstrate the required expectations, skills, behaviour and attitudes in accordance with the Physiotherapy practice thresholds in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, it is important to reframe the idea of 'you failing the student' - to 'the student not meeting the outlined requirements'.

If you are required to provide feedback to the student that they have not progressed satisfactorily during their PEP, it is not useful to use language of 'fail', 'failing' or 'failure'. Instead, use language such as 'you have not met the requirements of this PEP'. Your Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education will provide guidance to both you and the student during this process.

## Tension within the supervisor and student relationship

If there is conflict or tension within the supervisor / facilitator and student relationship, it is important to identify this as early as possible. Determining the core sources of tension and how to manage or resolve these through professional, respectful dialogue is critical. Sometimes it can be a clash of personalities, a disconnect between expectations, unclear roles and lines of reporting, different communication styles or an upsetting event.

If the problem cannot be resolved between the individuals concerned it is important to notify and seek the support of the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education. Having someone outside the situation may help mediate discussions, support mutual understanding, and find ways to resolve the key issues and tensions to move forward with the placement. If the issue persists or cannot be resolved, it may be an option to engage a different supervisor or facilitator to support the placements completion.

It is important that you do not feel isolated, such situations, whilst challenging, often have the value of increasing our knowledge, skill and confidence in conflict management and can mature our practice of supervision and facilitation.



## The distressed student

It can be stressful for students to put into practice newly acquired knowledge and skills in an unfamiliar practice environment and to meet other academic-based assessment requirements such as assignments. Additionally, students are trying to concurrently balance paid work, family and other responsibilities. If you identify that a student is distressed and you are concerned for their wellbeing, acknowledge this and ask whether the student is willing to discuss this with you. You must explain that you cannot necessarily keep what the student discloses to you confidential, and that you may need to seek advice from the University. This is essential if you consider the student to be at risk.

Sometimes just expressing what is happening for them is enough for students to feel better. Provide students with information about the range of counselling and support services that may be of value.

Please access [www.utas.edu.au/students/shw/counselling](http://www.utas.edu.au/students/shw/counselling) for more information.



Depending on the nature of support required, information on the following support services may also be appropriate:

**Beyond Blue:** [www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/contact-us](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/contact-us)

A depression and anxiety support service providing advice and support via telephone 24/7 (1300 22 4636), daily web chat (between 3pm–12am) and email (with a response provided within 24 hours)

**Lifeline:** [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Phone 13 11 14 for confidential telephone crisis support

**1800RESPECT:** [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au) A 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Call toll-free 1800 737 732

**Mental Health Helpline:** [www.mhct.org/getting-help/](http://www.mhct.org/getting-help/) is a free statewide 24-hour/7-days a week service for mental health crisis reaching all regions, phone 1800 332 388. The service is operated by mental health professionals who can help to arrange mental health assessment and intervention.

## KEY MESSAGES

Conflicts are a normal and inevitable part of the human experience.

Conflict is not necessarily negative. If skilfully resolved in a calm, respectful and professional way, managed conflicts can facilitate enhanced communication skills, improve relationships, lead to innovative and changed ways of working.

The following fact sheet provides a range of suggestions for managing conflict effectively as a supervisor.

Conflict occurs when an action by one person obstructs, or clashes with the actions, interests, goals, or values of another person. Conflict in healthcare environments can be ignited by differences in perspectives, personality and leadership styles, communication skills, ethics and system-related factors such as limited resources, unclear roles and competing demands.

As a supervisor, you may be faced with conflict situations. Conflict could occur between yourself and students, the student and healthcare staff, or between students. The key is being able to respond in a measured and skilful way. You might find the following strategies useful when encountering and trying to resolve a conflict situation between others. The principles also apply when managing conflict between yourself and student/s or colleagues.

### Strategies for resolving conflict

Be aware of your own response to conflict. A good place to start is to consider your own experience of conflict situations, both in terms of what has worked well, and what has not, and to reflect on your usual way of responding to conflict. For example,

- Do you avoid conflict at all costs by remaining silent and saying nothing, or avoiding the person wherever possible?
- Do you become defensive, retaliate, fight to win?
- Do you find a way of compromising to resolve the conflict?

Seeking additional training and support can help to increase our confidence and effectiveness in resolving conflict and help to reframe conflict as a negative experience, to one that offers opportunity to improve relationships, learning and ways of working.

### Consider appropriate timing and setting to 'name-up' and address the conflict.

It is important to 'name-up' conflict, rather than ignore it and have it escalate to effect relationships, patient care or student learning. It is also important to address the conflict situation in a private setting when there is sufficient time for the people involved to both communicate their views and experience and respond to the concerns and feedback voiced by others.

Do not attempt resolution 'on the run', for example when someone provides their views and feelings about a conflict then disappears or is called to respond to other pressing job demands. It is also helpful, when emotions and tensions are high, to allow people some space and time to gather their sense of calm and balance, before addressing conflict.

## **Approach involved individuals separately and gather information about the conflict situation.**

It is important to meet the individuals involved in the conflict separately, to find out how they perceive and feel about the situation. This will afford individuals a safe space to reflect and give voice to their own experience and enable you to build a picture of what the conflict looks like, including possible underlying factors.

Use open-ended questions, note each person's verbal and nonverbal communication, summarise what you are hearing and check that your understanding accords with what the person is hoping to communicate. Focus on issues and behaviour as opposed to the other party's character or personality and ask for examples.

To help make sense of the conflict situation, gather information from the individuals involved and see if you can identify the following:

- What are the key points of disagreement?
- What are the points of agreement, or is there a common goal or need?
- What actions (of the other) are considered unacceptable and why?
- What are possible solutions that satisfy both individuals involved?
- What are the things that each person needs to resolve the conflict?

Bring people together to discuss and resolve conflict in a respectful and empowering way

Having named up the conflict, gathered information from the individuals involved, identified an appropriate time and space to discuss the issue, it is important to establish and maintain a space for respectful dialogue in order to effectively resolve the conflict. Consider the following:

- Outline guidelines for the interaction such as respectful communication (no interrupting labelling, insulting, stereotyping or name calling), active listening, attempting to see the situation from the other persons point of view and focusing on issues and actions (not personality or character traits)
- Define the conflict as a mutual problem to be solved not as a win/lose situation
- Explain conflict is normal and expected, however, that conflict needs to be effectively addressed and resolved to enable learning and moving forward.

## **Foster active listening and skilled communication to discuss conflict.**

Your approach, verbally and nonverbally, will greatly affect the process and outcome of addressing the conflict situation. Consider:

- modelling respectful behaviour and communication,
- providing space for each person to describe the conflict in the most specific way possible and its impact, from their perspective, using 'I statements',
- guiding the focus to remain on the issues and behaviour, not the other person's character or personality, and
- enabling space for individuals to identify any contributing factors that appear to have helped create and continue the conflict.

Support the consideration and understanding of the other person's perspective

Consider:

- trying to understand the perspective of the other person's experience of the conflict situation, their thoughts, feelings and needs, and
- encouraging active listening.

### **Identify key issues and negotiate a resolution / change**

- Acknowledging the different experiences and perspectives, try to reach an agreement on the key issues – these should be defined in a clear constructive (not personalised) way. Identify common ground / goals / needs (where possible)
- Explore solutions 'What would a successful resolution of the issue look like?
- Negotiate an agreed change / solution, be as specific as possible. For example, are you requesting a behavioural change that is possible and probable or are you requesting someone to modify a personality trait?
- Express the need for mutual effort if resolution is going to be a possibility.

### **Check-in and reassess**

Negotiate a time to reassess progress in resolving the core issues that created the conflict and to review actions and solutions as required.

### **What to do when conflict resolution attempts are not working?**

Despite our best efforts, sometimes conflict resolution attempts may fail. For conflict situations involving students, the Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education can provide additional support. Engaging this level of support is particularly important if you have a student that is monopolising your time due to conflict issues and is resistant to conflict resolution, or becomes threatening to you, other students or healthcare staff. In this later instance, the student can be removed from the healthcare environment under the directive of the Academic PEP Coordinator as part of the PEP risk management process.

Most of the time conflicts can be dealt with effectively. Modelling effective conflict resolution processes can offer students a rich resource and learning which they can take forth into their own physiotherapy career.

As a summary, remember the following:

Be aware of your own response to conflict

Identify the conflict situation, reflecting and becoming clear on your experience, perspective, thoughts, feelings and needs

Consider the appropriate timing and setting to 'name-up' and then address the conflict (naming up and addressing conflict will likely be at two different time points)

Adopt a respectful, empowering approach

Approach the meeting with the other party with a view of conflict as a mutual problem to be solved, acknowledge potential discomfort, negotiate guidelines for interactions particularly around respectful communication and overall aim of mutual benefit – i.e. working better together

Demonstrate active listening and skilled communication, discussing conflict in a clear, specific way

Consider and seek to understand the other person's perspective

Identify key issues, common ground, aims or needs and negotiate a resolution / change

Check in and reassess

Access support and training as required

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ClinEd Australia: Managing difficult situations – tools for supervisors

Available at: [www.clinedaus.org.au/topics-category/managing-difficult-situations-tools-for-186](http://www.clinedaus.org.au/topics-category/managing-difficult-situations-tools-for-186)

## KEY MESSAGES

To sustain our ability to care for others and to support positive student learning experiences, we must first attend to our own self-care needs, professional development, and support.

Regular, mindful activities of self-care that support our need for movement and exercise, nutrition and hydration, rest and relaxation and connection with others are important.

Attending to our own professional development, reflecting, and seeking feedback as a supervisor or facilitator is also important.

### Managing your own self-care and wellbeing

Supporting quality student placement experience requires significant personal and professional investment.

Most people working in the health sector are more prepared and able to take care of others, as opposed to taking care of themselves. However, attending to your own self-care and wellbeing is fundamentally important. There is a wealth of self-care literature and resources, see below for some suggested links. However, for the sake of offering key ideas about where to start we suggest:



Whilst these are basic ideas, they are often the first things to go when we are stressed. As a reminder, it is important to take care of our physical self-care needs with nutritious food that fuels our body, nourishes our minds and mood; have adequate hydration and move our body with physical exercise you enjoy.

Get outside for some sunshine and contact with nature. Go for a brisk walk, look at the sky, have a walking meeting as opposed to a sitting one. Make spaces in your day for moments of stillness, rest and relaxation. Savour your morning coffee as a self-care ritual, take a few mindful breaths before having a difficult conversation with a student. Play some music in the car or whilst doing paperwork. Do something that brings you joy every day.

Stay connected with significant others in your life, and with colleagues who build you up and support you.

### Ongoing professional development

Quality learning environments not only value student learning and teaching, but the ongoing learning and professional development of staff. Being a registered physiotherapist requires ongoing professional development. This commitment to ongoing learning aids a sense of resourcefulness to manage increasingly complex health care issues and demands, supports networking and can reinvigorate your supervision practice. Place value on your own professional learning and development.

### Reflecting and seeking feedback as a supervisor

Just as students benefit from constructive and timely feedback, so can we. Reflecting on our own performance as educators and supervisors enables us to acknowledge our strengths, determine what went well, and identify learnings we can take on board to enhance our practice.

Many supervisors take the time to critically reflect on these issues, on an individual basis or with peers. There may be value in having a post-placement team debrief with a set of focused discussion points to facilitate reflection and evaluation of the PEP rotation. Consider seeking feedback from your student/s at the end of the PEP. Speak to your Lead for Physiotherapy Clinical Education regarding evaluation tools that can be distributed to your students to facilitate feedback on the quality of your supervision of students.

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## Professional Experience Placement (PEP)

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