

PLANNING YOUR THIRD YEAR PLACEMENTS

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I identify potential supervisors?

Talk to your Clinical Tutor about your competency needs and interests. They will give you ideas if they can and if not will be able to point you in the direction of someone else who may know more about a particular area of interest. You can also contact the placement planners for further ideas. A printed version of the supervisor database, containing contact details of all local supervisors will be available on the table near the trainee pigeon holes.

2. How do I ensure that I have achieved all of the clinical competencies by the end of training?

It is the responsibility of the trainee to discuss with their Clinical Tutor their competency development needs and to explore with potential supervisors whether there is scope to address these needs through the opportunities available on placement. The Cumulative Logs of Competencies and Placement Experiences on Pebblepad should be used to track competency development and experiences across placements and will help to clarify your development needs for third year.

3. Is the allocation of 3rd year placements done on a “first come, first served” basis?

No! Please be proactive in raising this with any potential supervisors you speak to. You can approach potential supervisors and check out whether they can offer a placement. This does not however guarantee that you will definitely be able to have that placement. The placement planners, who organise and co-ordinate all the placements in liaison with your Clinical Tutor, need to check:

- Whether there is a potential clash with the need for first and second year placements
- Whether the placement will fulfil your own training needs in terms of core competencies and the range of experience you have had to date
- Whether other programmes within the region need to use that placement
- Supervisor needs and circumstances
- Whether others in your year group have requested the same placement

Final allocations can only be made once all of this information has been clarified.

4. If several people want the same placement, who decides and what factors are taken into account in the decision making process?

The factors that will be considered in reaching a decision about placements that are oversubscribed include:

- Any outstanding competency development needs each trainee has yet to address as part of their training
- Whether any of the potential trainees for that placement are doing their research linked to the placement

- Whether any potential trainee has not had the opportunity to have that type of placement/clinical experience (where others in their year group may have done)
- Whether the potential trainees would/would not be able to gain similar experience on another placement with a different supervisor.

Final decisions are made by the Clinical Tutors and placement planners. This process is overseen by the Joint Directors of Clinical Practice

5. Can I do a placement outside of the region?

Due to NHS commissioning arrangements and pressure of placements and supervisors, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure placements outside of our region. However, there are some instances where it may be possible. For example, if you want to gain specific experience in a speciality where there are no placements offered within region or if you wish to do a placement in a speciality that is oversubscribed, you can make a case for doing a placement outside of region. You need to be aware in this instance that trainees from within that region would take priority, and that the placement planners would need to liaise with these programme teams to discuss this, in line with the agreed national protocol on out of area placements. If you are keen to pursue an out of area placement, please ensure that you inform your Clinical Tutor and the placement planners as early as possible in order that there is sufficient time to negotiate with other programmes. Please do not approach potential supervisors until this has been negotiated with the relevant local course programme tutors. This process of negotiation can take some time and may mean there is a delay in trainees being informed about whether the placement is available. Trainees who do request an out of area placement must ensure that they also identify alternative placement options within region which can serve as a back-up should their first choice placement not be available.

6. Can I do placements with non-clinical psychologists?

Yes. For example, in the past trainees have been supervised by psychotherapists, counselling psychologists or family therapists. However, a clinical psychologist within the service would still need to hold an overseeing role in relation to the professional development aspects of the placement. This is a BPS/HCPC requirement.

7. Can I do a placement with a supervisor that I have already done a first or second year placement with?

Yes- providing you are clear about the aims of the placement. For example, it may be that you want to return to a child placement with the main aim being a focus on developing skills in using a specific approach such as family therapy, where your previous experience within that setting and you may wish to work with a previous supervisor in a new clinical context. The main advantage of this would be that you don't need to get to know a new service/supervisor, but a disadvantage is that you don't get to experience a new service/team or type of working approach. In considering this, you would need to look at your core competencies with your Clinical Tutor and be clear about which core

competencies you addressed in your first placement with the supervisor and what a subsequent placement with the same supervisor would add to that.

8. Can I do the same placement with the same supervisor for the whole year (i.e. 3-4 days a week)?

Yes- providing that you have clear aims for what you want to get out of the placement/learning needs and outcomes. This has the advantage of keeping it simple and allowing time to focus on developing skills in a specific context or approach. Neither the programme team nor potential employers would view this option unfavourably- it is actually quite a sensible option and if the placement meets all of your main needs then this can work really well for trainees.

9. If you want to work in a specific speciality when qualified- do you need to have done a 3rd year placement in that speciality?

This is changing; employers do not necessarily expect this although with increasing competition for posts, some specialties do look for additional third year experience. If you know which area you hope to work in after qualifying, you could seek information from qualified staff that work in that speciality. In specialities where there are few jobs and lots of potential applicants this type of experience may be particularly helpful – so it is worth doing some research into this before committing yourself to your third year placements.

10. How many supervisors do I need to contact?

Placements do sometimes fall through at the last minute for a variety of reasons (a supervisor may become unavailable for example, or we need to rearrange original allocations). We strongly advise you to have alternative plans in the event that you are not allocated your first choice(s). This may involve making enquiries with several supervisors. In these circumstances, please make supervisors aware that you are looking at a number of options. If you do not pursue a placement after enquiring about it with the supervisor, please inform the supervisor of this. Maintaining good relationships with supervisors is vital for the success of the programme as a whole, as well as your future relationships with potential employers and services.