

WORK EXPERIENCE IN GENERAL PRACTICE - A GUIDE FOR THE 6th FORM STUDENT



<https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sixth-form-placements>

An Introduction to 6th Form Work Experience

The Postgraduate Department for training in General Practice has been a longstanding supporter of the concept of facilitating entry to undergraduate training. We feel that in order to ensure high quality General Practice in the future we should encourage an understanding of what it means to be a modern day GP.

We are supportive of anyone who has serious intent to apply for Medical School and needs to gain exposure to General Practice as part of their portfolio of experience to assist in their application. We feel the best experience in Primary Care is provided by a training practice. These are GP Practices that are familiar with the needs of learners and have been quality assured against the standard of the learning and working environment.

The application process for medical training at university comprises of the following components-

- Predicted grades and results from A Levels
- Reference from school / college
- Personal statement

Unlike many university courses, medicine is considered to be a vocational degree and this selection is not purely based on academic ability but also on demonstration of a deep understanding of the work of clinicians and of personal attributes that would make a good candidate for a career in medicine.

Medical work experience is an ideal opportunity to achieve a better understanding of the roles of clinicians and how they fit in with other health care professionals. It is an opportunity to gain insight into the rewards and challenges facing clinicians. During the work experience placement you can explore why the attributes of a good candidate have been so defined and how you can identify those attributes within yourself.

During Your Placement

A work experience placement is usually for one week. When sourcing your placement it is important that you consider patient confidentiality, dignity and autonomy. Therefore you should not approach your own practice, one you think friends or relatives may be registered at, or one very close to your home. This means you will be unlikely to have any contact with anyone you know whilst in your placement.

We will advise the practice to devise a timetable for your placement. Ideally this will involve spending some quality time with the GPs, Practice Nurse, Practice Manager and administrative staff. It is entirely up to the practice if they decide to allow you in with the GP / Practice Nurse during consultations.

When you have completed your placement it would be helpful if you could complete a 'student feedback sheet'. This will ask you questions about what your placement was like, and any comments or suggestions you may have. This can be returned to the GP School anonymously and the information captured will help us further develop and improve placements where necessary. The feedback sheet can be found on our website.

Health, Safety and Insurance Guidelines

You will be covered by the Practice's Public Liability Insurance.

During the work experience placement, the Practice must provide you with the following:

- A risk assessment outlining any potential hazardous activities that the you may be involved with whilst on work experience
- A safe workplace, including safe entry and exits
- Safe equipment with which to work - Work procedures and systems which are safe to use and that cause no risk to health
- Sufficient training to allow you to work competently and safely
- Safe arrangements for using, handling, storing and moving things
- Adequate facilities and arrangements for your welfare
- A healthy working environment

- Safety clothing, if required
- A programme of suitable activities

Whilst on work experience you are treated as an employee and your responsibilities include:

- A duty of care of your own health and safety
- A duty to take care of the health and safety of others who might be affected by your actions
- Getting to know your employer's safety policy and rules and abiding by them
- Ensuring that the way you are dressed is safe for the sort of work you are doing
- Behaving safely at work
- Immediately reporting any accident, damage to equipment or hazardous situation to your supervisor in the Practice

At all times you must-:

- Respect and protect confidential information
- Respect patients' dignity and privacy
- Make sure your personal beliefs do not prejudice your behavior towards patients

How do you apply for work experience?

You apply for a placement by contacting a practice directly. There is a list of practices who take students available to download on our website. Once you have agreed a placement, the practice will ask you to complete an application form and sign a confidentiality agreement.

Capturing Your Experience

Many applicants to Medical School limit reference to their work experience on their personal statement as just a list of placements with the amount of time they spent there. Some candidates will just describe the role they had during the work experience. The successful candidates will have captured key insights into how the doctor interacts with other healthcare workers and staff. They will also have demonstrated an understanding of the attributes of a good clinician and importantly an understanding of how they might cope with the challenges that providing good care and the impact on them personally.

There are several ways of gathering this information through reading, thoughts on how care might be provided or through close observation and practical experience. However the process common to all of these methods is reflection.

Reflection is a process whereby an experience is reviewed after the exposure and is analysed in such a way that areas of good performance and improvement can be identified.

Reflection can be facilitated by asking yourself open structured questions e.g.:

- What did I see?
- What did I think was good about what I saw?
- What made me feel uncomfortable about what I saw?
- How would I have done it differently?
- What more do I need to know in order to understand what I saw?
- How does what I saw compare with what I have read?

At the end of the placement you may find it useful spend some time with your supervisor to reflect on your work experience.
