

**Our Ref:** HEE\_HCS\_COVID-19

**Sent via email**

To:

Year 2 Healthcare Science PTP students

21 May 2020

Dear student,

## **Your education programme and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing an extraordinary impact on our everyday lives. HEE have been working hard to support the national effort to combat the coronavirus.

We are pleased to hear that so many HEE students have been asking their education and placement providers how their skills and experience can be used to support the health service. We have also heard that placements needed as part of your training programme have been paused as placement providers are unsure how to accommodate them into the changes that the NHS has had to make. We are writing to you today to let you know how both these issues can be addressed.

### **Impact on education programmes**

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing disruption to your programme progression. We have been working closely with colleagues from across the health system, including the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS), the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM) and the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), to address the challenges students face in progressing. We now have national guidance<sup>1</sup> for students that will provide you with information on how to progress through your programme.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Students in the final year of their PTP**

Given the significant pressures on the system and the need to ensure that front line services are fully supported, it is not possible to continue with your current education and training programme as it was.

Where students have not completed all their clinical placements, your university will work to alternative ways to demonstrate the same learning allowing students to progress to the end of your training programme.

### **Students in the second year of their PTP**

You will be invited to vary your education programme structure, to temporarily include paid employment in addition to continued academic study. The paid-placement may count towards your course required time in service, and will resolve some of the issues that have seen planned placements be paused or withdrawn. This is similar to the offer also being made to nursing, midwifery and allied health profession students.

The time set aside for academic study would build in continued academic progression and a period of structured contact with your university to ensure ongoing academic and pastoral support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you do not want or feel able to opt-in to this revised programme, you will be supported by your university to consider other options. Universities are working on the principle of supporting all students so they are not disadvantaged in progressing with their education programme, whether or not they decide to opt in to the revised programme.

### **Students in their first year of their PTP**

Undergraduate students in year one should remain on programme and continue with your studies. It is important that we continue to develop and train the HEE workforce of the future so that you can take up an NHS role when the pandemic has passed. However, you may find that nature of the programme is temporarily changed, and that you spend a greater proportion of your time studying academically than you otherwise would do.

You may volunteer or undertake paid work within a healthcare setting while maintaining your academic study if you wish to do so but volunteering or paid work will not normally be counted towards practice hours and experience.

## Next steps

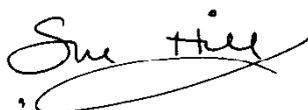
For those eligible Year 2 students, we have asked your university to contact you, ask and then record if you would like to enter into a paid-placement. To undertake any of the paid elements of work, NHS employers will require further information to allow us to link you, your university course and the NHS placement provider together. You do not need to take any direct action here until your university contacts you.

**Please wait for your university to get in touch with you and reply as soon as you can with the details they require.**

Regardless of the choices you make, you will retain the status of a 'student' and will continue to access and receive funding from the Student Loans Company, including your student loan. If you opt-in and you have a school aged child, we will provide you with a letter that you can provide to your child's school, certifying you are a 'key worker' and therefore entitled to childcare.

We know this is a difficult time for you and your family. We also know that many of you want to do whatever you can to help the NHS - and your future colleagues - to help patients. We hope the options we have set out for you here will help you to do that while continuing with your training to prepare you to join the fantastic NHS workforce.

**Yours faithfully,**



**Dame Professor Sue Hill DBE**  
**Chief Scientific Officer**



**Professor Berne Ferry**