

SECTION 7: PLACEMENT SCHEDULE

CLINICAL STUDY TIME PATTERN OF DAYS IN COLLEGE AND ON PLACEMENT MINIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS ON PLACEMENT

Although the basic pattern of days in college and days on placement is fairly straightforward (and is set out below) supervisors and trainees need to be aware that clinical study time and research study need to be factored in. The tables below should make this clearer, but some explanation of how clinical and research study time fits into placement time is needed first.

Clinically-related study on placement

Clinical study time allows trainees to read up about clinical work they are undertaking - for example, to read about tests they are using, or about theories or models which relate to clients they are seeing.

Trainees are entitled to the *equivalent* of half a day's clinical study time while on placement. This allows them to read-up on clinical issues related to their clinical work. The time works out at about one hour for each day on placement – up to a maximum of three hours a week.

The critical word in the specification above is “equivalent”. Study time could be taken as a half-day, but in many settings this may not be the most efficient use of time, and the rule of thumb is that the time should be taken in the way which best suits the trainee and the supervisor. It can be taken as a “block” of time, but also (for example) at the rate of one hour a day. Whatever way it is taken, this should be negotiated at the start of the placement and interpreted flexibly in relation to need – there may be some variation from week to week. For example, while in some weeks there may be a lot of reading to do, at other times there may be little, and it would be better to spend more time on clinical activities.

Bear in mind that:

- a) Study time is not leave. It cannot be carried over from one week to the next, or added into annual leave
- b) It is ‘earned’ by virtue of being on placement. This means that when the trainee is on placement fewer than three clinical days, the amount of clinical study time decreases proportionately. It follows that in weeks where the trainee is absent from the placement, there is no entitlement to study time

At two points in the training cycle (in the academic holidays of the first year and in the summer of the third year) trainees can be on placement for four days a week. The fifth day is a full day of study. As such clinical study time need not be taken while on placement, and trainees can work four full clinical days. The tables below make this clearer.

PATTERN OF DAYS IN COLLEGE AND DAYS ON PLACEMENT

Pattern during academic terms

During academic terms trainees spend either two days or one day a week in college, as follows:

Year 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
placement	college	placement	college	placement

Year 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
placement	placement	college	placement	college

Year 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Trainees are on placement three days a week, with two days for research or attendance at college.				college
College days are always on Friday. This means that supervisors and trainees are free to discuss which day is taken for research.				

Pattern outside academic terms

Out of academic terms trainees are sometimes available to work an extra clinical day on placement, but this depends on their year of training. As the pattern can be a little complicated it is best explained using the following tables:

Year 1	No of days per week spent on placement	clinical study time
Term 1 (usually late September - mid-December)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Christmas holiday	4	see footnote a
Term 2 (usually mid-January – late March)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Easter holiday	4	see footnote a
Term 3 (usually late April – early July)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Summer holiday	4	see footnote a

a) During holiday periods Year 1 trainees are on placement for 4 days a week. The fifth day is a full day of study. As such “clinical study on placement” is subsumed into the study day, and trainees can work 4 full clinical days. Because there are no college days, supervisors and trainees can take advantage of flexibility about which days of the week trainees come to placement, and which day is taken for study

Year 2	No of days per week spent on placement	clinical study time
Term 1 (usually late September – mid-December)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Christmas holiday	3	see footnote b
Term 2 (usually mid-January – late March)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Easter holiday	3	see footnote b
Term 3 (usually late April - early July)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Summer holiday	3	see footnote b

b) During holiday periods Year 2 trainees are undertaking research, and have one day for study time and one day for research. “Clinical study time on placement” is subsumed into the two study days. This means that trainees will be working 3 full clinical days.

Year 3	No of days per week spent on placement	clinical study time
Term 1 (usually late September – mid-December)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Christmas holiday	3	see footnote c
Term 2 (usually mid-January – late March)	3	trainees should have the equivalent of 0.5 days per week study time during these 3 clinical days
Easter holiday	3	see footnote c
Term 3 – up to the point thesis is handed in (usually late June))	3	see footnote c
Summer holiday	4	see footnote d

c) During Christmas and Easter holidays, “clinical study time on placement” is subsumed into the two study days. This means trainees will be working 3 full clinical days.

d) After the thesis is handed in, trainees can work 4 clinical days, with the fifth day being for study. The exception to this is when a trainee has formally requested (from both college *and* the placement supervisor) time to write-up their research for publication in a journal. If permission is forthcoming, they can have an additional study day to undertake this work (i.e. making two study days a week).

MINIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS ON PLACEMENT

- The BPS specifies that at least 50% of a trainee’s time on the Course is spent on placement.
- This requirement is not specified in terms of an expected number of days in each placement, but in practice this means that a trainee needs to accrue between 60 and 65 clinical days in any one six-month placement period.
- On some placements the number of days may drop slightly below this number – for example if a trainee is ill, or if there are other unforeseen circumstances.
- Trainees who anticipate accruing less than 60 days in a placement should discuss this with their Course Tutor. Trainees should not have less than 55 days on a placement.