

Widening Participation work experience programme

Since 2016, RCGP has been facilitating a widening participation primary care work experience programme in partnership with medical schools/widening participation departments in universities around the UK. RCGP supply the materials, and partner medical schools organise and deliver the programme, selecting eligible pupils aged 16-18 (in Year 12, first year sixth form, S5 in Scotland) to take part.

In order to be a 'partner', the programme must follow a set model of three core elements:

1. Pre-placement workshop
2. Three-day placement in general practice
3. Post-placement workshop

A three-day placement is preferable however this is somewhat flexible, and some partners have found that practices are more likely to take part if they can offer a one or two-day placement.

Partners are provided with the materials listed below, embellished with their logo, once they complete an agreement form stipulating that they will: follow the three-part model, keep in monthly contact with RCGP, provide overview WP data (see overleaf) and evaluation feedback, use the materials provided and reference RCGP on all communications.

There are two options available for delivery:

1. Pupils observe the general practice team.
1. Pupils shadow a fifth-year medical student during their final GP block (successfully piloted with Kings College London in 2019 and provides pupils with further insight into the life of a medical student.)

What resources do the RCGP provide?



For pupils
Pupil guide
Pupil agreement form
Syringe pens
Tote bags
Reflective diaries (left)
Lanyard, plastic insert for lanyard, and lanyard insert template
Template certificate
Template evaluation questions

For partners	For practices
Step by step task list	Practice guide
Partner guide	Patient consent form
Template application form	Digital poster promoting their participation
Digital poster for school and colleges	Thank you card and letter
Pre-placement workshop slides and activity sheets	Template evaluation questions to send to practices
Post-placement workshop slides and activity sheets	

What role do partner medical schools/widening participation departments play?

- Recruit pupils and practices (usually UG teaching practices)
- Match pupils to practices (ensuring pupils are not registered at that practice)
- Deliver pre-and post-placement workshops
- Feedback to RCGP online and during frequent phone conversations

For more information about how RCGP are supporting work experience in general practice visit:
rcgp.org.uk/workexperience. Interested in becoming a partner? Contact schools@rcgp.org.uk

FAQs

Is confidentiality an issue?

Patient confidentiality does not prevent practices from hosting a work experience pupil, but it is essential that it is maintained. The practice guide de-bunks this myth and includes recommendations to assist practices. Activities, on this topic, are also provided for the pre-placement workshop, because this presents an enormous learning opportunity for the pupils. The only stipulation is that pupils cannot be matched to the practice where they are a registered patient.

What widening participation criteria do partners use?

RCGP only collect anonymised overview data from partners: - how many of the pupils will be the first generation in their family to go into higher education and how many live or have lived in local authority care. Partners can select pupils using any further widening participation criteria they wish, usually this is set within their WP department. They can also select pupils based on their medical school's entry requirements should they wish to. Often partners select pupils who are already part of longitudinal widening participation programme (this is preferable). We recommend that these pupils still have to complete a 150-word description of their 'motivation' to do the work experience placement

Who arranges placement dates?

We recommend that, prior to the pre-placement workshop, pupils take ownership of their placement, having been supplied with the contact name and telephone number of their placement practice they call and arrange mutually suitable dates. Instructions are provided in the pupil guide to help them as this can be daunting.

What time of year do placements take place?

In the past, placements have taken place over the summer with pre-placement workshops delivered to all pupils in one go. In 2020 the programme will 'start' on January 1st with many materials updated and provided from RCGP at this time. The programme 'ends' on October 31st when all placements should have taken place and workshops delivered. Partners who decide to start placements prior to April are asked to notify RCGP as early as possible because limited merchandise (reflective diaries) will be available prior to the new financial year.

How many pupils are matched to a practice at any one time?

If a practice has agreed to take two pupils they may prefer for them to be on placement at the same time, this can work well. Pupils should agree suitable dates before contacting the practice. Two is the preferred maximum at one time. Some practices take numerous pupils over consecutive weeks.

What are the incentives for practices?

In the past a token gesture of £150 was supplied to practices as part of this programme however this restricted the programme to the financial year, added administrative burden, limited the number of placements which could be delivered and set a precedent that is not seen in other sectors. In 2020 participating practices will be provided with a digital poster which they may wish to display in their waiting room to promote their participation in the programme. They will also receive a thank you card and letter to recognise and praise their efforts. The RCGP are also developing CPD opportunities for staff in participating practices i.e. training and guidance via webinar and also reflection resources to allow GPs to include work experience within their appraisal portfolios.

Travel costs and accommodation

RCGP are budgeting to reimburse pupil travel in 2020, with an awareness that in some rural areas they travel a great distance to placement via taxi (this may also include limited accommodation funding also). More information about how this will be calculated and distributed amongst partners will be available by January 1st 2020.

How is the programme evaluated? Do you monitor the pupils to determine if they gain entry into medicine?

RCGP are not in a position to collect and store pupil data and do not have access to UCAS to determine which pupils gain entry into medicine. We are aware that some partners do monitor pupils, often using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), and welcome an overview of this data being shared with us where possible. Partners are asked to evaluate the programme, but there is flexibility in how this is undertaken, template evaluation questions are supplied.

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