Appendix 11 Guidelines for 3rd year placements

##### Guidelines for allocation of third year placement

Mid-way through your second year of training (usually January/February), we ask you to begin to think about your final placement which will take place between February and the end of September in your final year.

We will meet with your Year Group to discuss Third Year placements around this time; as you will see from these guidelines there is no advantage to be gained by planning much before this time, (though you are welcome to let us know your provisional ideas).

We have moved away from the idea of an ‘elective’ placement, although you will have a chance to have a say about what kind of placement you would like. It is important to note that we have to balance your needs against the training needs of others in your year and in other cohorts. In addition, there may be gaps in your portfolio which you may be required to address in your final placement.

Trainees may choose to do a final placement in any area, but please be aware that if you are choosing a placement that you know to be in demand for first and second years (OA, LD and CAMHS placements are particular pressure areas) then you may have to cope with more uncertainty about whether the placement is available. We also advise you to think very carefully about ‘split placements’. Although it is tempting to try and cram in as many different experiences as you can into your final year this tends to make placements very fragmented and your life more stressful! However there are some placements which are only available one or two days a week in which case we will discuss this with you.

Our main aims are to ensure that placements are allocated fairly, and your training needs are met. We are very keen to avoid a culture of first come, first served! Please discuss your preferences with Margo before approaching a supervisor. Margo will be coordinating the allocation of third year placements for your year but Alison is also available for discussion about which option is right for you. If you do talk to a potential supervisor you should be very clear with them that preliminary discussions do not mean that you will definitely be coming on placement, and other trainees may also be interested.

##### Finding out about placements

There is a placement register, kept on Blackboard, which describes the experience available on placements and any requirements of trainees. We do our best to keep the information up to date, but as placements are constantly changing it is not an exhaustive list. It is worth talking to Margo and Alison about the placements in the file and the other options available. Your placement visitor and mentor can also help you to think about how to ensure you have the competences and experience you will need for your future career. We may also suggest talking to other trainees who are familiar with the placement.

##### Out of Area Placements

There are often trainees who are keen to do placements outside our catchments area. This would generally only be agreed if there is no comparable placement locally; or where there are compelling personal reasons and we cannot guarantee funding for additional travel or accommodation costs; extra funding has to be agreed on a case by case basis.

If you are interested in an out of area placement, it is particularly important that you come and talk to Margo as early as possible. There is a protocol agreed between Programmes for approaching out of area supervisors and any discussions with the supervisor must be agreed with the relevant Programme first. It is likely that you will have to wait to hear whether the placement is needed by local trainees working in the catchment area before we can approach the supervisor which can mean last minute arrangements being made.

##### How are placements allocated?

We ask you to contact us to discuss your initial ideas. This gives us an overview of which placements will be in demand, and any possible pressures on placements. Trainees are then encouraged to approach the supervisors to discuss what they can offer, and possibly to visit the placements. We are keen to minimise work for supervisors and ask you to arrange a joint visit if more than one trainee is interested in a placement. This means that you should let us know if you plan to visit or contact a supervisor. We ask you to make a request for your final placement by the beginning of September at the end of your second year. It is wise to think about a second option in case your first choice is not available. We aim to have most electives confirmed by the time you go on your research placement.

##### What if more than one trainee would like the same placement?

We make every effort to ensure that trainees are matched with placements which meet their training needs, and generally this is possible. If competition does arise, we aim to be as open as possible with each trainee, and to explore other options which meet their interests. If this does not resolve the situation we will ask the trainees involved to submit a statement about why they have chosen the placement, based on outstanding clinical competencies to be achieved, research interests and future career intentions plus any other relevant factors. A specially convened committee including a member of the Placement Team, the Clinical Director and a senior NHS representative, will then consider these alongside the supervisor’s preference. Trainees will be notified by email of the outcome. Trainees must not try to reserve a placement for themselves.

I hope that this will help answer any queries you may have. If you have any further queries it is best to email Margo in the first instance on m.s.ononaiye@soton.ac.uk.

*Margo Ononaiye*

updated September 2016