

**Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics
Programme Code:X820**



PRACTICE PLACEMENT:

- 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SELECTION OF PRACTICE PLACEMENT PROVIDERS**
- 2. FORMAL AGREEMENT & SITE PROFILE**

School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science

College of Health & Agricultural Sciences

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1. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SELECTION OF PRACTICE PLACEMENT EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Practice placement learning is a mandatory component of UCD's *MSc in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics* programme. On successful completion of the programme, graduates are eligible to apply for registration with the Dietitians Registration Board of CORU to practise as a dietitian.

Practice placement education facilitates the integration of theory with practice in graded developmental stages throughout the programme. It provides students with the opportunity to acquire the Dietitians Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for the dietetic profession and become safe, competent practitioners willing to accept personal and professional accountability for their work. Learning, initially developed within the academic components of the programme, is integrated into practice through the experience and supervision offered by structured placements within a wide variety of settings where dietitians are employed.

Practice Placement is delivered in the programme as two distinct modules as follows:

- Year 1 Practice Placement 1 DIET40080
- Year 2 Practice Placement 2 DIET 40110

Each student completes a minimum of 1000 hours of practice placement education in a variety of placement settings that represent current practice and service-provision of the profession. In year 2 of the programme, Practice Placement 2 facilitates over 400 hours of continuous learning in an acute clinical setting where consistency of performance and caseload management can be demonstrated.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the suitable selection of practice placement providers so that students on the programme are provided with the learning opportunities and learning support to meet the learning outcomes for the placement modules and to enable compliance with the CORU Criteria for Education and Training programmes. The document applies to Practice Placement 1 and Practice Placement 2.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- CORU Standards of Proficiency for Dietitians
- CORU Dietitians Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

PROCESS

- Prior to agreement of a placement provider, the UCD practice education team will discuss the requirements for placement provision detailed in this document with the potential provider site representative.
- Feedback (students/educators/tutors) from the previous year, if available and relevant to the criteria for selection, will also be discussed at this meeting. If issues have occurred relevant to the criteria for selection, appropriate actions will be agreed at this meeting.
- If the provider site meets the requirements, the programme administrator sends the placement provider the formal agreement and profile form.

Practice Placement 1 DIET40080

- A minimum of 6 weeks in a hospital setting and/or community setting that can provide learning opportunities to demonstrate attainment of competency in the criteria specified in the placement assessment form and professionalism assessment form. UCDVO placement can contribute to this block.
- A maximum of 4 weeks in a nutrition industry/government agency/voluntary or suitable alternative that can provide the learning opportunities to demonstrate attainment of competency in the relevant criteria detailed in the placement assessment form and professionalism assessment form.
- A minimum of 2 weeks in a food service institution or suitable alternative that can provide learning opportunities for the following learning outcomes:
 - Describe the processes of meal production, selection, service and delivery within the institutional setting.
 - Discuss portion sizes of common foods and the food portion sizes used within the institutional setting.
 - Outline how nutrition principles can be applied to food services within the institutional setting.
 - Evaluate the impact of food service regulations, standards and guidelines on the nutritional quality, hygiene and temperature regulation of food service systems.
 - Identify the role of food services personnel in the delivery of nutritional care.
 - Recognise the limitations of institutional food services systems in the delivery of nutritional care.
 - Critically analyse the food served in terms of population recommendations.
 - Discuss the importance of integrating nutrition and dietetics in the provision of food services in institutions.
- A minimum of 2 weeks health promotion project to include design, implementation and evaluation of a health promoting initiative.
- A minimum of 2 Practice Educators (PE) must be involved in review and sign off of the assessment form(s), one of these must be a CORU registered dietitian. In placement sites with only 1 PE or where there is not a CORU registered dietitian, the UCD practice tutor will be involved in supporting the completion of the assessment form by the placement site PE.
- PEs undertake training provided by the UCD practice education team. Training is provided via pre-recorded and/or live videos. Additional onsite training can be requested and will be considered in line with resources available at the time. Feedback from the students in the preceding year is included. If issues have occurred in the previous year(s), training to consider and problem-solve these issues will be included.
- The placement provider must nominate a student coordinator (SC) for the placement. UCD recommends that the student coordinator and core members of the education team are facilitated to undertake placement education training.
- The placement provider agrees to complete and submit a designated online feedback questionnaire as soon as practically possible at the end of each placement to enable audit, review and monitoring of the educator placement experience.

Practice Placement 2 DIET40110

- Placement providers must provide a minimum of 400 consecutive hours to allow continuity of learning and to demonstrate consistency of performance and caseload management in a clinical setting.
- Students observe and gain professional dietetic experience in the management of disease-related malnutrition and medical nutrition therapy in the acute care setting.
- Learning opportunities must be provided to enable students to demonstrate competence in the criteria outlined in the placement assessment form and professionalism assessment form.
- A minimum of 2 PEs must be involved in review and sign off of the assessment form(s), one of these must be a CORU registered dietitian. In placement sites with only 1 PE or where there is not a CORU registered dietitian, the UCD practice tutor will be involved in supporting the completion of the assessment form by the placement site PE.
- All practice educators must (as above) undertake training provided by the UCD practice education team. Training is provided via pre-recorded videos and live; a recording is available for those who cannot attend. Further onsite training is arranged as required. Feedback from the students in the preceding year is included. If issues have occurred in the previous year(s), training to consider and problem-solve these issues will be included. The placement provider must have capacity for the students to work individually at later stages of placement.
- The placement provider must nominate a student coordinator (SC) for the placement. UCD recommends that the student coordinator and core members of the education team are facilitated to undertake placement education training.
- The placement provider agrees to complete and submit a designated online feedback questionnaire as soon as practically possible at the end of each placement to enable audit and review of the educator placement experience.

2. Formal Agreement & Profile



Agreement start date:	1 August 2025
Agreement end date:	1 August 2027

These dates relate to the validity of the content, roles and responsibilities. Reviewed: July 2025 Next Review Date: July 2027

Formal Agreement & Profile between University College Dublin and Practice Placement Provider for MSc in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Placement Education	
and	
Placement provider organisation & address:	Site Manager: CORU DI:
Services and/or care provided:	
Telephone:	Contact email:
Website:	
Locations of all sites students are expected to attend:	
Student Co-ordinator (SC) name & email:: Job title of SC: Background/useful information about SC e.g.new to role, previous student training experience.	
Number of practice educators: <u>Full Time:</u> <u>Part Time:</u>	
Duration of placement <u>4 day week</u> for _____ weeks or <u>5 day week</u> for _____ weeks Number of students:	

Please outline any specifics in relation to the following	
Health & Safety requirements/expectations	
Record keeping, NCPM requirements/expectations?	
Dress code/uniform requirements?	
Pre reading requirements?	
ONS/enteral feeding products in use (Can students use mobile telephone apps to access these?)	
Mandatory HSELand or other training ?	
Travel & transport requirements?	
Student accommodation available?	
Other?	

Practice Educator staff who will be involved in delivering student training**

Practice educator name	Job Title	CORU number

****Please note the following:**

In accordance with CORU Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Dietitians 2019 Section 16.1:

All Dietitian educators involved in teaching, supervision and assessment, must do so fairly and respectfully using agreed criteria. They must have access to assessment tools and be trained in completing these assessments and providing feedback during the placement.

UCD is required to provide training to practice educators to enable them fulfil these obligations, specifically in relation to:

- progressive achievement of student independence in practice
- practice education assessments and their link to the standards of proficiency and the marking criteria used
- development of practice educator skills.

The pre recorded training video for practice educators involved in Placement 1 will be available at the following link from August 25 2025.

<https://www.ucd.ie/phpss/about/subjectareas/clinicalnutritionanddietetics/practiceeducationplacements/practiceeducatorsresources/>

UCD is required to provide evidence to CORU that all Dietitian practice educators involved in this placement have completed or will complete training. Department Managers or a designated alternative is required to ensure that all staff involved have been directed to complete training as soon as practically possible.

Inclusion in the table above is accepted as confirmation that training has been completed or will be completed by those listed. Amendments/additions can be communicated directly to mscdietetics@ucd.ie if they arise after this date.

Section 1: Responsibilities of UCD

The responsibilities of UCD are divided into three stages:

- i) Preparation for practice placement
- ii) During practice placement
- iii) Post practice placement

1.1) Preparation for practice placement, UCD will

1. Provide students with the academic background and behavioural change training appropriate to the practice setting to enable them to become autonomous, competent learners.
2. Teach students the principles and methodology of collaborative learning.
3. Provide students with learning and assessment resources appropriate to the practice placement setting and in conjunction with specific resources recommended by the training site.
4. Have documented procedures in place for dealing with grievances and to take the responsibility to ensure that placement providers know where to access this information.
5. Provide clear and transparent guidelines and procedures that should be followed when a student does not reach the required level of competence as specified in the placement assessment form. These must be in accordance with UCD academic regulations and professional and regulatory requirements.
6. Provide the placement provider with practical information relating to the student and the placement arrangements prior to the start of practice placement. Information should include but is not restricted to the following:
 - a. Name and UCD connect email of student
 - b. Date and length of placement
 - c. Contact details of the UCD Practice Tutor (PT) who is available for queries throughout the practice placement
 - d. Learning goals for the level of practice education
 - e. Assessment criteria
 - f. Evidential documentation (on request) to include compliance with:
 - a. Garda vetting
 - b. Health screening and vaccination
 - c. Fitness to practise
 - d. Child protection training
 - e. Insurance
 - f. Health and safety training
 - g. Fundamentals of GDPR
 - h. Safeguarding of Adults at risk of abuse
 - i. Open disclosure
 - j. Making Every Contact Count
7. UCD Practice Tutors (PT) will (if required) collaborate with the Student Coordinator (SC) to devise a student timetable to meet the learning objectives of the students and the CORU-defined learning requirements of the placement within the available resources of the dietetics department prior to commencement of the placement. The PTs will provide tutorials, feedback and support in the identification of learning outcomes, critical reasoning and self-assessment during the practice placement.
8. Provide training for site staff on the key concepts of assessment and feedback in clinical education. The pre recorded training video for practice educators involved in Placement 1 will be available at the following link from August 25 2025:

<https://www.ucd.ie/phpss/about/subjectareas/clinicalnutritionanddietetics/practiceeducationplacements/practiceeducatorsresources/>

9. Provide a suite of supporting resources for practice educators online here:
<https://www.ucd.ie/phpss/about/subjectareas/clinicalnutritionanddietetics/practiceeducationplacements/practiceeducatorsresources/>

1.2) During practice placement, UCD will

1. Maintain regular contact with the student and the PE and SC as required via the PT.
2. Respond to any queries from student(s) and the PE/SC via the PT.
3. Collaborate with all parties (PE, SC, student) in organising on-site practice placement student tutorials/visits via the PT.
4. Provide feedback to the PE and SC after each tutor visit by email/phone to the PE cc'ing the SC
5. Collaborate with the SC/PE to provide support in carrying out student assessments. However, PT does not document in or countersign student medical/dietetic records as the patient is under the care of the PE.
6. Guide and support the student and SC/PE on student absence and underperformance.

1.3) Post practice placement, UCD will

1. Process the results of each practice placement through the appropriate examination board in accordance with UCD examination policies and procedures.
2. Provide clarity and guidance to the student who has not reached the required level of competence, as to his/her options and rights in accordance with UCD academic regulations and professional requirements.
3. Facilitate opportunities for placement providers, PEs and students to participate in structured feedback on all stages of the practice education process.
4. Review and respond to all post practice education placement feedback from all relevant stakeholders. This feedback is used to contribute to collaborative planning and a quality improvement process.
5. Facilitate the student to reflect on his/her learning outcomes and to incorporate learning into personal learning plans for future practice education.

Section 2: Responsibilities of Placement Provider

The responsibilities of the placement provider are divided into three stages:

- i) Preparation for practice placement
- ii) During practice placement
- iii) Post practice placement

2.1) Preparation for practice placement, the placement provider will

1. Complete this Formal Agreement & Profile document and return it to UCD at least 6 weeks prior to the commencement of placement.
2. Nominate a SC to liaise with the PT.
3. Attend training provided by UCD on practice placement education.
4. Ensure all PEs have attended training prior to commencing placement with the students.
5. Facilitate collaboration with PEs and PT (if required) to devise a student timetable that meets the CORU-defined learning requirements of the practice placement for the student's stage of training. The timetable should reflect the need for the student to develop basic skills and competence in identifying nutritional problems, planning nutritional care, monitoring nutritional interventions and communicating with service users and healthcare staff. There is no requirement for students to rotate through every dietetic staff member or speciality area(s).
6. Ensure that students get an equitable and manageable workload that meets their CORU-defined learning requirements for the student's stage of training.
7. Communicate changes affecting practice placements as soon as possible to the PT.

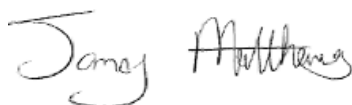
2.2) During practice placement

1. The placement provider commits to creating a positive supportive professional learning environment for the student.
2. PEs fulfil their role in partnership with, and with the support of, the PTs.
3. The placement provider ensures that an orientation/induction process is carried out with the student at the beginning of the placement clearly outlining expectations and any site-specific requirements (e.g. Catering system, Patient Menus, Compulsory Policies etc.)
4. The placement provider ensures that procedures are in place and arrangements made in the event of the absence of the PE designated to student supervision.
5. The placement provider will inform UCD in the event of any student absence from placement and follow the procedure as outlined in the practice education manual.
6. At outset, each SC/PE will clearly explain performance expectations to the student, using the appropriate level placement assessment form for the stage that the student is at.
7. PEs will support the student's learning in assisting the student in setting objectives and suggesting planned learning activities in collaboration with the PT if required (FORM BC) and in accordance with the placement assessment form at the beginning of each week of placement.
8. PEs will provide regular, structured teaching, supervision and actionable feedback to the student (5-minute feedback form BC) throughout the placement.
9. The PE reviews and signs the FORM BC, FORM D, at a minimum of weekly, to confirm authenticity. The PE agrees a time with the student at the beginning of each week for the forms to be reviewed and signed.

10. PE will provide updates to PT prior to PT onsite visit via email/phone/in-person. PE will review the feedback provided by the PT after the PT onsite visit. PE will include the SC or update the SC on these correspondences.
11. PE will obtain feedback from the student and countersign all student signatures in medical/dietetic records for all patients seen by the student including those patients where the PT supervised the student.
12. PEs and SCs are responsible for assessing each student's level of clinical and professional competence in accordance with the assessment requirements. A minimum of 2 PEs must be involved in review and sign off of the assessment form(s), one of these must be a CORU registered dietitian. In placement sites with only 1 PE or where there is not a CORU registered dietitian, the UCD practice tutor will be involved in supporting the completion of the assessment form by the placement site PE. Key assessments will never rely on the assessment of a single PE. PE/SC should agree a time with the student at the beginning of the last week of placement for review and signing of the summative placement assessment form(s).
13. PE should inform the SC and PT at the earliest opportunity if there is any concern about the student's ability to fulfil the practice education learning objectives, any breach of safety or professionalism or an 'underperformance' that requires a 'Risk of Failure' form (FORM J) to be issued during the practice placement. The 'risk of failure' form identifies areas for the student to work on within an agreed timeframe.

2.3) Post practice placement

1. The SC/PE ensures that all placement assessment forms and/or student documentation are returned to UCD via dietetics.admin@ucd.ie.
2. The PEs and SC complete the UCD feedback form and return this to UCD..
3. The placement provider reviews feedback provided by UCD (if applicable) on students' experience of the placement and uses this feedback to contribute to collective planning for practice placements in collaboration with the PT.



Signature on behalf of UCD:

Date: 11/07/2025

Associate Professor James Matthews

Dean and Head of School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science

Signature on behalf of Placement Provider (Dietitian Manager/nominee):

Date:

Glossary: standardise terms across all course documents:

UCD practice tutor (PT): CORU-registered dietitian who is a UCD employee based in UCD and intermittently in the placement provider sites as determined by practice educators' and students' educational needs.

Student Coordinator (SC): Placement site CORU-registered dietitian nominated by dietitian manager as lead practice educator for the placement site.

Practice Educator (PE): Placement site practising CORU-registered dietitian who orientates, teaches and assesses dietetic students while on practice placement.