Level 3 Advanced Technical/Extended Diploma in Health & Care

CENTRE GUIDANCE

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNERS WORK PRACTICE:

THE EMPLOYERS VOICE

CornwallCare
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Technical Diplomas - Work Practice/Work Experience in Health & Care

Welcome to the City & Guilds new 16-19yrs L3 vocational Technical Diplomas in Health & Care endorsed by the DfE, national Health and Adult Care employers and supported in their development by 5 HEIs across England.

Launched in January 2016, you will see that as part of the qualifications, learners are required to complete a minimum of 200 -370 work placement hours in health and/or care practice for each year of their studies. This can include the following;

- **Work experience placements set up, managed and supervised by the training provider.**
- **Volunteering work in Health and/or Care practice (provided that the expectations of the employer is that the learner follows the same code of conduct and is treated equal to other employees and as an employee).**
- **Paid employment in Health and/or Care practice.**

You may notice that there is an increase in work practice requirements compared to some other similar study programmes. The Health & Care employers and training providers designing and developing our new qualifications felt this increase was now necessary to ensure that all future learners were best placed and prepared to progress directly into health or care employment, onto an apprenticeship programme or into higher professional studies. Subject to timings for DBS clearance, 200 hours minimum work practice equates to one day per week over the academic year or approximately 5.5 weeks if block placement periods are a preferred option.

As a consequence increasing the vocational work practice/placement requirement will enable future learners to;

- **'better apply theory to practice in their respect of their learning and development.**
- **get more involved and immersed within their role and purpose within a health and/or care setting.**
- **build a stronger deeper relationship with their care colleagues, those in receipt of care and their associates e.g. carers/families/allied health and care professionals.**
- **have a greater understanding of the 'care journey' of those in receipt of care and/or health services.**
- **develop more confidence and abilities based on increased vocational practice to showcase themselves at interview with health and/or care employers looking to employ new staff or take them on as employed apprentices'.**

Dawn James, Business, Education & Development Manager Cornwall Care Ltd (June 2015)

Moving into Higher Education and Professional Training

Anyone considering a career in health or care needs to also show they have significant relevant work experience on their application forms when applying for higher education and professional training courses.

Universities may accept learners on their grades, but request that they get credible work practice experience before offering a secure place on a course. This means that learner's applications can be looked at more favourably if there is evidence of relevant and significant work experience within the sector. This is especially relevant today for occupations such as nursing, midwifery and allied health care professions.

As an example, one member of an interview board at one University in England has identified some of the common themes of why potential learners are not accepted onto Nursing Degree programmes. These are as follows;

- **No clear reasoning for why they wish to do the job.**
- **No experience in the acute sector especially for more than a few days just observing.**
- **Lack of insight into the true demands of the role (what is known by Nursing Midwifery Council as the 6 C's).**

- **No up to date understanding of current issues within the context of the health setting.**
- **No real idea of what nursing/working in the health and care sector is about.**

Moving into Employment or onto an Apprenticeship in Health or Care

Not all learners will want to progress into higher education and there are other reasons why significant work placement experience is of benefit:

- **It allows the learner to find out if they are suited for care or health work, understand the working hours and expected salary and the types of roles and responsibilities they will undertake.**
- **The learners will gain information on the roles of others and this may inform them about possible career choices.**
- **Learners will develop work skills and understand how to work with and for others.**
- **Learners can use their experience to demonstrate to prospective employers that they are committed to their chosen career and ideally placed for either direct paid employment or into a work based apprenticeship in either a care or health setting.**

Learners should ideally start their College coordinated/managed work experience placements as soon as possible after DBS clearance is obtained. This experience will help to contextualise all that they learn in the classroom. To support this, they should where required also be encouraged to consider undertaking voluntary work in a health or care setting to enable them to reach the minimum 200 hours work practice per year as required. Experience has shown that some learners also already secure paid health or care work alongside their studies which can also be included for the work placement requirement.

Types of Work Practice in Health and/or Care

With the support of employers, learners can be provided with work placements in a variety of health and/or care settings and the links developed with employer's means that they themselves become involved in the mentoring and training of learners. As part of our new Technical qualifications, there is no requirement as to the type of placement or number of different placements undertaken in health and/or care. This is left to the training provider to discuss and manage with the learner. For example, a learner may be in placement in the same residential care home throughout their studies or on a hospital ward, or may decide to experience a number of different work placements through each year in different settings.

Links to the Synoptic Summative Assessments

The active learning experience of a work placement supports the cycle of learning described by David Kolb (1984) whereby learners experience, reflect, think and then act on their learning. The assimilation of this process develops critical thinking skills and personal learning. This can as we know, create opportunities for new learning and motivation to achieve. This also enables them to fulfil the requirements of their work placement workbooks which then support their final synoptic summative assessments for each year e.g. the professional discussion in year 1 and their care/health project in year 2. (www.businessballs.com/kolblearningstyles)

The Employer's Voice

In producing this guidance, two employer organisations have been contacted us and asked to express, from their perspective, the importance of substantial work placement experience for prospective learners and employees. Their words stand by themselves.

Debbie Mathewson- Clinical Training Manager Yeovil District Hospital (June 2015)

'I am contacting you to inform you of how pleasing it is to see that City & Guilds have allocated an increased number of work placement hours for learners on their new technical qualifications.

Certainly as an employer, the more practice hours that an individual student can get not only supports their embedding of knowledge but also supports their decision as to their future career pathway as well as gaining invaluable opportunity to understand the needs of employers and the needs of service users/patients.

So often we get applications for health posts where on paper and in interview they succeed, but once in the work place it is evident that much of the in class knowledge is lost 'in translation' within the work setting. So, the more students see and get involved in practice during their studies , the less they 'fear' the environment when they succeed in obtaining either direct employment, an apprenticeship of progress into nurse training'

Alex Price Lead Internal Verifier Sanctuary Group (June 2015)

'I have been speaking to a student in a Care home who is currently undertaking a health and social care qualification at a local College. She was placed on work placement with us. She told me she is learning so much about the clients who are living with dementia and from the staff she works alongside she has decided to stay on as a volunteer. She is hoping to go on to a nursing degree after the summer but as she intends to stay in the area she will continue with her volunteering at the home'.

To Conclude

Achieving the minimum required work placements hours can easily be embedded through the learner's curriculum timetable either on a weekly basis and/or on block release. There is also ample time to accommodate this in the summer term of each academic year. It is expected they will be supported in finding work experience in health and/ or care, some of which will be set up and managed by the training provider who will monitor the authenticity of the learners progress and achievement throughout and ensure they complete the qualification work placement workbooks provided. Further guidance on the latter can be found in the L3 Technical Diploma qualification handbooks. (http://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/health-and-social-care/care/3625-advanced-technical-diplomas-in-health-and-care#tab=documents)

Maintaining and possibly further developing new links to local employers in health and care settings underpins the success of the learners vocational experience, and whilst we acknowledge for some providers this increase in placement hours might prove to be a new challenge, we hope that College managed placements, plus any additional voluntary or paid health/or care work learners secure themselves will provide the richness and experience which truly underpins successful future carers in health and /or care.

We wish your learners every success with our new qualifications.

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