

## Information for clinicians supervising international physiotherapy students

At Coventry University, we pride ourselves on our student diversity and our ability to attract overseas students. Over the years, we have had some outstanding students from abroad, several of whom have stayed on in the NHS, contributing to a much needed local workforce.

Our international students do very well in their placements, especially when the educators recognise differences in culture and its impact on communication, performance, and socialising specifically in the first and second placements. From the testimonials from previous educators, the key to successful placement both in the home and international students is to assess students based on the improvement made while on placement rather than expect a certain level of cultural and communication competency from week one. Evidence suggests that physiotherapy is perceived to be a profession that places value on specific characteristics such as being extrovert and proactive (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Wolf et al. 2008) with Hammond et al. (2019) arguing that such attributes can conflict with some racial/cultural backgrounds.

In a recent study exploring BAME student experiences during their physiotherapy training, respondents said they felt vulnerable when attempting to adopt the 'extrovert' physiotherapy identity as they may be positioned negatively based on cultural stereotypes (Hammond et al. 2019). For communication and engagement, like our home students, we are looking for an improvement between the start and end of placement for their clinical competence and client engagement rather than a change of their individualism, which can undermine their confidence and possibly reduce their chance of a successful placement.

In the unlikely event that a student has not been able to achieve the expected progress or agreed placement goals, and it is thought that this is due to their different culture or background, we need to look at the issues creatively and sensitively. To that end, the university has a dedicated diversity placement adviser to support placement educators in creating a support plan. The adviser can be contacted at [physioplacement.hss@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:physioplacement.hss@coventry.ac.uk). Please expect a response within 2-3 working days. We also encourage all our CE to attend our Clinical Education updates at least once in three years when face to face education is possible. Following COVID-19 restrictions we have introduced online clinical education, please access the resources available via this website <http://physiotherapy.coventry.domains/clinical-education/>. Contact the placements team if you require the access password.

Finally, we wish to thank you for the continued support of physiotherapy placement and education.

Best wishes,

Dr Yetunde Dairo, Physiotherapy Clinical team Coventry University. October 2019

### References

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