



Community Studies Unit, School of Medicine

Quality Visits to Student Placements

Requirement to undertake Quality Visits

The General Medical Council (GMC) carried out a routine quality assurance visit to University of Liverpool School of Medicine in 2012. A requirement arising from the visit was for the School to develop a quality management system for community placements. A project was piloted in 2013 following which a quality management system for placements and a rolling programme of quality visits has been developed.

Purpose of Quality Visits

The purpose of conducting quality visits is to ensure the quality of community placements by:

- Identifying and promoting good practice
- Identifying areas for improvement and making recommendations of how to achieve this
- Developing strong links and relationships with community placements
- Assessing compliance with standards developed by Community Studies Unit

Quality Visits and the Community Studies Unit Quality Management System

The quality visit is one part of the quality management system, which also includes:

- Monitoring the student experience via student feedback process
- Monitoring the experience of the GP via self-assessment forms
- Sharing good practice through newsletters, open days and “bright ideas” lists
- GP and CCT training, peer review and professional development

Quality visits are one type of visit to placements carried out by the Community Studies Unit. An induction visit is carried out for all new placements. The Community Studies Unit may initiate an extraordinary visit in response to a request, a failure to meet agreed standards or following a complaint or the identification of a problem.

Cycle of Quality Visits

A quality visit to each placement should be undertaken at least every three years. A schedule of quality visits will be prepared by the Community Studies Unit. The cycle of visits will be composed of rounds, the first round commencing in the academic year 2013/14.

Carrying out a Quality Visit

The Quality Visit is structured around the Quality Standards for Community Placements and feedback received from students and the lead GP via the Quality Visit Toolkit, a suite of electronic questionnaires designed to gather information around the student experience whilst on placement.

The visit should last between 45 minutes and an hour and has the following structure:

- A short opening meeting (5 minutes) to set the tone for the visit as open and constructive and to ensure the placement staff are at ease.
- The main body of the visit (45 – 50 minutes) to include a discussion around the feedback from the Quality Visit Toolkit, student and patient experience issues, examples of good practice and innovation, addressing any issues and actions for the future. A tour of the facilities at the placement can also be included.
- A short closing meeting (5 minutes) to summarise key discussions and findings, agree on actions to be taken and plan follow up visits.

Quality Visits will be conducted by two members of staff from Community Studies Unit. A Quality Visit Summary template is provided to guide discussion and record key discussion points.

After a Quality Visit

Following the visit, the visit notes will be used to produce a Quality Visit Report which, when approved, will be sent to the placement as a PDF within 6 weeks of the visit. The Community Studies Unit will liaise with the placement to monitor implementation of agreed actions and provide support as required.

To find out more about Quality Visits, please contact Janet Machin, Community Studies Unit

Quality Coordinator on Janet.Machin@liverpool.ac.uk or 0151 795 4337