**Protocol for the practice and observation of practical skills education in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences**

The educational programmes in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences prepare students to practice in a wide range of healthcare and wellbeing settings.

Each programme equips students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours required to practice safely and effectively in a constantly changing healthcare environment. Programmes ensure students are prepared for professional practice embracing and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Students will learn both the theory and practice of their chosen profession and will be taught in both the university and the clinical / healthcare environment.

Through clinical skills-based and practice-based settings, students will experience a wide diversity of healthcare situations and environments in which their professional skills are developed for practice as a qualified, registered health professional.

Some practical skills will be taught in clinical skills laboratories, practical rooms and in the clinical setting, and students will both practise and personally experience the skills aligned to the intended learning outcomes of the session. During these sessions, students will sometimes be required to act as patient models. Acting as a patient model is a valuable part of learning by experiencing healthcare from the perspective of a patient which will contribute to the students’ development in becoming an empathetic healthcare professional.

We recognise and understand that, for a variety of reasons, some students may find being a model or practising skills on fellow students and / or professional colleagues uncomfortable. Please be assured that the University is committed to provide an inclusive environment for all students to thrive. The following protocol outlines considerations in this respect for the practice and observation of practical skills education in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences:

* Practical skills will be introduced in a supervised environment, by a subject expert holding an appropriate qualification which is deemed appropriate by Keele University.
* Practical skills sessions will require students to act as model patients for their partner, for example, to practice handling skills, palpation (i.e., finding anatomical landmarks) and assessment and/or treatment techniques.
* Sometimes students will be asked to modify dress, which may for example, be to wear shorts and T-shirts. Occasionally for some programme areas, including physiotherapy, students may also be asked to remove their T-shirt (bras and sports bras are permitted). Students are welcome to contact us to confirm specific arrangements in this respect for their programme.
* Where there is a requirement to modify dress for a particular procedure, adaptations to dress will be offered, where possible, to maintain modesty and dignity considerations from a cultural or personal perspective. This may, for example, include the possibility of wearing a long-sleeve T-shirt and leggings.
* Where available, screens or separate rooms will be provided in practical teaching sessions for changing clothing. Alternatively, students may choose to wear relevant practical kit underneath usual clothing.
* Where available and practicable, it may be possible to arrange for practical skills to be practiced behind a screen with another student under the supervision of a qualified practitioner.
* We will normally be able to grant student requests for a practical skills partner of the same sex or gender, where practical skills involve handling or close observation.
* Information in respect of any known risks and limitations of the practical procedure(s) will be made available to students prior to experiencing the practical procedure for the first time.
* Students are encouraged to inform the member of staff overseeing the session of any health-related contraindications to their participation in practical skills activities. Students should be assured that any such information will be treated confidentially.
* Similarly, students are encouraged to inform the member of staff overseeing the session if they become aware of any health-related contraindications to their participation during a practical skills session.
* Students have the right, at any time, to withdraw from part of, or the whole of the practical procedure. Should any such withdrawal be made, it must be agreed with the tutor.

A diverse student community will enhance the understanding of, and healthcare provision for, the diverse communities that they will serve, and, as such, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to find culturally competent and/or sensitive solutions for you when acting as a patient model for the practice of clinical skills.

For any questions or concerns you may have about practical skills education, please do contact us at your earliest opportunity to discuss with a member of academic staff aligned to your programme.

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