Effective learning experiences

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Effective learning places the student at the centre of the learning experience. Students are given the opportunities and space to take responsibility for their own learning, to seek out learning experiences and develop their own practice, without compromising public safety. The level or form of practice supervision can decrease or change with the student's increasing proficiency and confidence.

An effective learning environment is one which provides opportunities for meaningful learning experiences that contribute to a student meeting their learning outcomes. This can mean a variety of things depending on the student's learning outcomes, their stage of learning, the level of support needed and the environment in which they are learning.

Effective learning experiences can take place across different environments, including learning environments outside of the physical setting, such as simulated learning suites or virtual wards, allowing students to learn and consolidate their knowledge and skills across a wide range of different settings and situations. The learning experiences a student has through their programme should include and reflect the full spectrum of care relevant to the student's area or field of practice. Within a planned learning experience, spending time in different settings within that experience can add value to student learning – for example, if a student is on a learning experience of a number of weeks that is largely based on a surgical ward in a large hospital, time spent observing and learning in a theatre setting or on a recovery ward would be extremely valuable in providing a more rounded perspective and experience for the student concerned. Another example would be if a learning experience was taking place within a district nursing team, when spending time with the community pharmacist or working with a telehealth unit would provide good exposure to a range of healthcare issues and settings.

A positive and inclusive culture within an effective learning environment values learning, and all people within the learning environment should understand their role in enabling learning to take place. Interprofessional learning that supports multi-disciplinary working is key. Students should learn about the roles and responsibilities of other professionals and learn from whoever is best placed to support their learning needs to ensure the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person centred, holistic care.

Reasonable adjustments

An effective learning experience is inclusive and takes account of any equality and diversity considerations, or reasonable adjustments that need to be made not only to aid students in their learning and assessment, but also in providing any adjustments required to enable professionals to support everyone's learning needs and to better reflect on their own practice and learning needs.

Applying reasonable adjustments is a legal requirement and is applicable not merely to students but also to those involved in education and training, including practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors. Consideration of whether any requested adjustments are indeed reasonable in the circumstances, are genuinely required, to what extent and what form those adjustments should take is an ongoing process and should be discussed, reviewed and may be subject to change over a period of time.

Specifically focusing on reasonable adjustments for students, further information is available from a range of sources.

This includes information about reasonable adjustments produced by the RCN and the RCM.

In addition, the organisations below also provide advice specifically targeted at making reasonable adjustments for students in higher education and apprentices which may be useful.

- Advance HE
- the Office for Students
- Disability Rights UK
- Scope
- the British Dyslexia Association
- the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- the Scottish Association for Mental Health