



Institute of
Medical
Illustrators



Work Experience in Medical Illustration Services

A Guide for IMI Members

Version History

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These guidelines have been developed by the Institute of Medical Illustrators, in consultation with specialist advisors. They should be considered a guide to good practice, providing a baseline for auditable standards. If necessary, adaptations may be made to take into account local policy.

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Introduction

As medical illustration is a relatively small profession, a young person considering their career may not be as au fait with it as they might with careers such as radiography or nursing. Therefore, the opportunity of work experience can be invaluable both for the student and also the profession. Many of today's medical illustrators made their career choice following work experience placements or visits to their local departments. Such a placement allows greater insight into the various roles within our profession and an opportunity to witness the job firsthand and experience what it is like to work within a hospital environment.

This document provides guidance to help medical illustration services assess the suitability of work experience students and plan their visit so the student and the department can benefit fully from the experience.

Pre-Work Experience

Receiving work experience enquiries

If a work experience enquiry is made either directly to your department or via your employer's work experience team, it is important to assess the suitability of the candidate or student before accepting them. This can be done face-to-face, via phone interview or by CV via email. This helps ensure that the student has a genuine interest in the profession and is considering medical illustration as a career. It also gives you an idea of their level of understanding of photography and the profession, which helps tailor the student experience more appropriately.

Due to the nature of our profession, many employers will not accept applications for clinical role work experience from those under 18. If you receive a lot of enquiries, you may want to reduce your criteria for work experience further, to those currently studying or in possession of a photographic degree or equivalent.

Suitability

A face-to-face or phone interview is a useful way to learn about the student's current photographic knowledge, previous work experience, what they are hoping to gain from their work experience. It is important to run through the unique nature of our job and reassurance around the sights and experiences that they may be witness to and how they may cope with distressing situations.

A record of successful and unsuccessful work experience applications should be documented. Appendix 1 provides sample interview questions.

Dress code guidance

It is important to inform the work experience student of the expected dress code prior to their arrival. The following dress code guidance should be followed by work experience students who will be entering clinical areas:

- Clean, tidy, and smart attire should be worn. Casual trousers such as denim jeans and track suit bottoms, leggings, crop tops, low cut tops, miniskirts, denim skirts or skirts with high splits, tight fitting clothing, revealing fabrics, and items of clothing containing logos, slogans or graphics which may reasonably be perceived to cause offence, are deemed unsuitable. This list is not exhaustive, items should be appropriate for clinical areas with a diverse range of patients.
- Shoes must be comfortable for walking long distances and must be safe, sensible, smart, clean and suitable for clinical environments. Fashion trainers, Uggs, heels or open toes such as 'crocs' (which are backless and have holes) should not be permitted.
- Bare below the elbow (including the removal of all jewellery and watches, except for one plain wedding band).
- Hair should be kept tidy and clean, and beards neatly trimmed (exceptions may apply to those with cultural religious requirements). For health and safety reasons, hair and beards may need to be covered in some areas such as theatres. In clinical environments, long ponytails and dreadlocks must be fastened so that all hair is above the collar using a plain secure fastener.
- Aromatic products, including perfume and aftershave, should be kept to a minimum as these can offend patients and may induce nausea in clinical areas.
- Any visible tattoos that may be deemed inappropriate or offensive to any member of the public, patients or other staff members should be covered where possible.
- Fingernails should be clean, short, and unpainted, with no false or acrylic nails due to infection control risks in clinical settings.

Work experience policies and paperwork

Work experience enquiries are usually dealt with by the work experience team who ask the student to complete paperwork ahead of their acceptance or arrival. Such paperwork may include equal opportunities monitoring, pre-employment health questionnaires, vaccination records and work experience application forms. It is best practice to keep a regular dialogue with the work experience team to check the progress of applications.

Record Keeping

It can be helpful to keep a record of the progress of a student's work experience enquiry. You may have multiple students booked in and at different stages of their applications (Appendix 2).

Work Experience Activities

Local Induction

A local induction should be completed when the student arrives. Your employer may provide criteria for this, and it should include but is not limited to:

- An introduction to all staff, including their role in the department.
- Location of toilets, kitchen facilities and directions to any on site restaurant or shops for lunch if required.
- Location of fire exits fire alarms and panic buttons.
- Issuing of ID badge
- Details of departmental first aider
- Dress codes
- Customer service standards
- Use of telephones, including personal phones
- What to do if the student is feeling emotionally distressed
- What to do if the student damages equipment
- Department structure

Confidentiality statement

Your employer will require any visitor to complete a confidentiality statement, to ensure that patients' data is protected in line with UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. This should be completed before any patient interaction or patient data is viewed. You can contact your information governance or work experience team for advice.

Work experience induction

It is advisable to brief the work experience student prior to engaging in any work experience activities or exposing them to the work we undertake. A reminder of the unique nature of our job and reassurance around the sights and experiences that they may witness is important. An induction document is helpful to ensure consistency for applicants (Appendix 3).

Work experience students should not be left unattended at any time during their placement, and there may be specific requests that are not appropriate for them to attend, such as non-accidental injury or bereavement jobs. It is important to assess work experience students for their suitability for attending theatre cases.

Work experience schedule and activities

It is helpful to have a planned schedule to follow for all work experience students, so that they get the most out of their visit. A two-day placement can work well and often suits busier departments; longer placements can be considered where there is scope.

Providing a work experience booklet or pack including a timetable of activities to your work experience student ensures they know what to expect, what activities they will be doing during their experience as well as providing them with a reference after their experience. This can include links to the IMI website and other useful resources.

Example work experience tasks are listed in Appendix 4. Services should amend to suit their needs; optional tasks are also listed should time allow.

Post-Work Experience

Evaluation questionnaire

After a student has visited for work experience, you should ask them to complete an evaluation form. This may help you improve the work experience you offer to those interested in our profession (Appendix 5).

Certificate of completion of work experience (IMI)

When the student completes their placement, it is good practice to issue a certificate. This shows that they have completed work experience in your department and the dates they attended (Appendix 6).

Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample interview questions

Questions	Response (Good, Average or Poor)	Additional Comments
Are you over 18?		
Tell me about yourself.		
Have you studied or are currently studying a photographic-based subject?		
Have you had any previous work experience? e.g. in another medical illustration department.		
What would you like to gain from a work experience placement in our trust? Do you have any specific objectives?		
What skills do you think you need for the placement?		
What do you understand about the term 'confidentiality' and how is it relevant to your placement?		
How do you cope in a distressing situation?		
What do you think you will be doing during any quiet periods on your placement?		
Do you have any concerns about your placement?		
Are there any areas you would rather not see?		
Outcome of interview: Are you happy to offer the applicant a placement?	☐ Y (continue with the form) ☐ N (provide details)	
Applicant's name, email, and address.		
List potential available dates and check against work diary.		

Photographer's post-interview to do list

1. Ask Manager to check the work experience interview.
2. Email the applicant paperwork for completion.
3. Book work experience dates into departmental diary.
4. Once 1-3 complete, confirm details with your work experience team as required, including a brief timetable for the student and agreed work experience dates.

Appendix 2. Work experience record keeping

	Name of applicant	Name of applicant
Reply to email request and arrange phone interview		
Undertake phone interview		
Send application forms		
Wait to hear from trust work experience team to see if health forms and references have been accepted		
Arrange dates		
Send student dress code documents		

Appendix 3. Work experience induction checklist

Advise the student that they will get the opportunity to use our studio to work on mocked-up patient protocols.	
Advise that they will only be shadowing a photographer and not taking any photographs of patients.	
Patients are often photographed when they are at their most vulnerable; advise the student that patients may not be comfortable having them there, but they should not be offended.	
Advise that some of the sights they may encounter are disturbing, but they must remain professional at all times.	
Inform students that they should wait until they are back in the department to ask any questions they may have about specific conditions.	
Let the student know it is okay to leave the bed space or studio at any time if they feel uncomfortable whilst a patient is being photographed.	
Discuss what happens if the student feels faint (it may be best they sit down on the floor immediately, rather than rushing for the exit).	
Remind the student that everything they observe whilst on work experience is confidential and must not be shared outside of the hospital.	
Advise the student of the NHS dress code and relevant clinical requirements the student must adhere to (such as the bare below elbow policy).	
Encourage the student to ask questions throughout their placement to make the most of it.	

Appendix 4. Work experience tasks

Shadow photographer in a studio environment	
Shadow photographer in a dermatology clinic	
Shadow photographer on a ward	
Shadow photographer with paediatric patient	
Demonstrate the department workflow for clinical images (receiving a clinical request for photography, photographic request/consent form, image processing, uploading and printing)	
Explain the theory of standardisation (camera settings, magnifications, establishing and close-up images and lighting)	
Explain consent for clinical photography / videography	
Discuss terminology used within medical illustration	
Discuss routes into the profession of medical illustration	
Review student portfolio with senior member of staff	
Photograph equipment in the studio	
Using one of the photographers as a model photograph standard views in the studio (AP, Lateral, Oblique, Rhinoplasty, Pinnaplasty views, cross-lighting)	
Using one of the photographers as a model photograph a mole (establishing, 1:1 close-up and dermatoscope)	
Show the student departmental and sharepoint sites and IMI website	
Show student examples of departmental portfolio	
Show current job vacancies on the NHS jobs website	
Spend time with video and design team (where applicable)	

Appendix 5. Sample work experience evaluation form

Please provide us with feedback to help us assess your work experience placement with our service. We use this information to develop the programme for future students.

What did you hope to learn from your placement?
Was this achieved? Yes No If no, please give details:
Has the placement given you a better understanding of working in a Medical Illustration department? Yes No If no, please give details:
Please rate the structure of the programme: Excellent Good Satisfactory Unsatisfactory
Was the duration of your placement: Suitable Too long Too short
Are there any activities you feel should be included in the programme? Yes No If yes, please give details:
Which aspect of your visit did you find most interesting and why?
Which aspect of the placement did you find least interesting and why?

Would it have been useful to have had more information provided, either before or during your placement?

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

Has the placement influenced your career choice in any way?

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

How would you rate your overall experience?

Excellent Good Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Please add any other comments you feel would be helpful:

Name:

Date:

Thank you for your help in completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 6. Example Work experience certificate (UHBW)



