

College of Integrated

Chinese Medicine

Practitioner

Guidance Notes

August 2018

# Clinical Observations Guidance Notes for Practitioners

#### Introduction

The following document provides a guide to the Clinical Observations Placements operated by the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine (CICM). Clinical Observations are considered as placement learning as the intended learning outcomes of the activity are integral to the BSc (Hons) Acupuncture and LicAc qualifications, the learner is considered a student first and they have come to the placement by virtue of their studies. Clinical placements take place within a healthcare environment.

For clarity, acupuncture practitioners who are willing to offer Clinical Observations Placements to CICM students will be referred to in this document as either ‘Placement providers’ and/or ‘Approved Practitioners’.

CICM is here to support both students and Approved Practitioners with the Clinical Observations Placement process and this involves ensuring that students are safe and prepared to go out on placement, placements are safe for the student and will provide them with learning opportunities (through observation) to enable them to fulfil the academic requirements of their course and, finally, to ensure that both Approved Practitioners and students enjoy a positive placement experience. CICM has a Code of Practice for the Clinical Observations Placement Learning (August 2018) and this and all relevant Clinical Observations Placement documentation can be accessed via the Practitioner Area on the College website ([www.acupuncture-college.org.uk](http://www.acupuncture-college.org.uk)).

* 1. Aims of the Clinical Observation Placements

The key aims of the Clinical Observation Placements for our Approved Practitioners/Placement providers are:

* To provide a suitable learning environment.
* To provide a safe environment
* To participate in quality monitoring

1.1.2 To Provide a Suitable Learning Environment

Clinical Observation Placements will aim to provide equitable learning experiences for all students through allowing students to observe all aspects of acupuncture practice. This will enable students to subsequently reflect critically on their observations experiences and fulfil the academic requirements for their course (Section 1.2). As a minimum, student observers should be able to look at the patient’s tongue and take pulses and discuss their findings with you, but otherwise to act as a ‘fly on the wall’ and simply observe you in your clinic performing acupuncture treatments and interacting with patients. The extent of the interaction the student has with the patient is, however, at your discretion and the patient’s discretion and we ask that this is discussed with the student at the start of the observations session.

However, this should always comply with the BAcC Code of Professional Conduct, as stated in section 64 of the Code:

64 You are allowed to have acupuncture students, potential acupuncture students, or other individuals present as observers in your practice. An observer may only be present with the explicit permission of the patient and may not carry out any part of the treatment. You must take care to avoid ‘coercive consent’ where a patient feels that they are under pressure to allow an observer to be present.

#### The student will also let you know what stage of the course they are at as this will determine their current level of understanding of Chinese medicine and acupuncture practice.

In preparation for the Clinical Observations Placements, all students will have attended a compulsory Induction session at CICM prior to commencing any placements. During the induction session, students are introduced to the Clinical Observations Placements and provided with a Clinical Observations Pack (Available via the Practitioner Area on the College Website). They are informed of the placement responsibilities and expectations, how to arrange observation sessions both with Approved Practitioners (Section 3.0) and are advised of the academic requirements linked to the Clinical Observations Placements (Section 1.2). Finally, students are advised of appropriate conduct during their observations (Section 4.0) and are required to sign the CICM Code of Conduct for Clinical Observers and complete a Fitness to Practise declaration (Section 5.0, Appendix A).

We would ask that Approved Practitioners submit feedback on student performance during observations placements through the completion of a short feedback form (Appendix B). Student support through mentoring and assessment of academic work arising from the Clinical Observations Placements will be the responsibility of CICM staff.

1.1.3 To Provide a Safe Environment

It is a requirement that all placement providers are BAcC registered practicing acupuncturists and, as required by the BAcC, practice in accordance with the BAcC Standards of Practice for Acupuncture and Code of Professional Conduct and have appropriate indemnity insurance.

For quality purposes, Approved Practitioners/Placement providers will be audited annually to ensure that they fulfill the requirements of the CICM Code of Practice for the Clinical Observations Placement Learning. The CICM Clinical Observations Audit form can be found in Appendix C.

1.1.4 To Participate in Quality Monitoring

CICM is responsible for the quality and administration of the Clinical Observations Placements. This is managed by the Programme Lead for Research & Reflective Practice (external observations) and is overseen by the Quality Assurance Committee and involves:

* Ensuring observation placements meet educational standards by undertaking regular (annual) audits with Approved Practitioners/Placement providers
* Acting as first point of contact for students and all Approved Practitioners
* Liaising with Approved Practitioners about all issues relating to student observations
* Providing Approved Practitioners with feedback from student evaluations.
* Providing reports for internal staff and responding to actions from agencies external to CICM who monitor and maintain standards
* Investigating any concerns raised whilst undertaking the clinical observations process
* Maintaining records of observations

Feedback will be sought from both students and Approved Practitioners on an annual basis in the form a standard questionnaire. Data will be analysed and used to inform reports for the both the CICM Quality Assurance Committee, BSc (Hons) Acupuncture Board of Studies and Kingston University Module Enhancement Plans. Feedback will be used to highlight areas of concern and good practice and facilitate the development of quality enhancing mechanisms. Outcomes of the quality monitoring process will be fed back to Approved Practitioners.

However, if you have any comments that you wish to make before the annual review cycle, please do not hesitate to contact the Programme Lead for Research & Reflective Practice (Roz Gibbs) or the Project Administrator (Ruth Wood).

* 1. Academic Requirements of the Clinical Observations Placements

At each stage of the course, students are required to reflect critically on their clinical observations experience and submit a structured Clinical Observations Journal. The journals are assessed and students will gain academic credit that will contribute towards module outcomes at all three stages of the course.

#### How to become an Approved Practitioner

If you are willing to take CICM student observers, please contact either the Programme Lead for Research and Reflective Practice (Roz Gibbs) or the Clinical Project (Ruth Wood). Alternatively, you may be approached by a CICM student and, with your permission, will then be contacted by the College.

The College will then be required to undertake a quality and safety audit (Appendix D) and this will be conducted with you either in person or by Skype. Once the audit is completed and you are in agreement to become an Approved Practitioner, you will be added to the College’s “List of Approved Clinical Observations Placement Providers (Approved Practitioners)” to which CICM students can access via Canvas, the College’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This is a secure area and students require a username and password to access the VLE. Your contact details will be listed with your permission and used only for the purpose that students can contact you to arrange a mutually convenient observations session, as detailed below in Section 3.0. If at anytime you no longer wish to accept student observers, please contact either the Programme Lead for Research and Reflective Practice (Roz Gibbs) or the Project Administrator (Ruth Wood) and they will arrange for your details to be removed from the List.

#### How Students arrange Clinical Observations Placements with you.

Students will be required to arrange their own Clinical Observations placements with one of the College’s Approved Practitioners. A List of Approved Clinical Observations Placement Providers (Approved Practitioners) will be made available through Canvas, the College’s Virtual Learning Environment. Students will then contact you to arrange an observations session (usually half-day or whole day) that is mutually convenient to both you and the student.

#### Student Conduct

Whist observing you in your practice, students are expected to adhere to the professional standards stated in the BAcC Code of Professional Conduct. Students are reminded specifically about confidentiality and advised that all interactions with patients in the treatment room are confidential and patient names, information and treatments must not be discussed outside of the clinic/treatment room except with the you, the Approved Practitioner. Names which could identify any person (e.g. patients, their relatives, practitioners, practice staff), must never be disclosed in any discussion outside the placement setting. All written work (Clinical Observations Journals) MUST be free of any confidential information and that all identifiable information they hold on USB, PC or other portable device (including mobile phones) falls within the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

#### 4.2 Dress Code for Student Observers

Students are advised to always dress smartly and professionally when they are undertaking clinical observations and it is a requirement of CICM that they wear a white coat.

#### CICM Code of Conduct for Clinical Observers and Fitness to Practise Statement

Before starting their clinical observations placements, students are required to sign the CICM Code of Conduct for Clinical Observers and complete a Fitness to Practise declaration (Appendix A). In order to retain their Fitness to Practise, at the start of each academic year, students are required to confirm there have not been any changes to their health and that they have not received any cautions or convictions since their previous declaration. Throughout the course students have a responsibility to inform the RRP Programme Lead and/or Quality Assurance Committee of any changes in their situation, e.g. reprimands, cautions, arrests. In addition, if a student’s health situation changes, or a student spends time in parts of the world that are deemed high risk for certain diseases they are required to inform the RRP Programme Lead and/or Quality Assurance Committee as soon as possible.

#### Placement Costs

All students are advised that the Clinical Observations Placements are a requirement of the course and contribute to the number of clinical hours that students undertake as required by the BAAB for an accredited courses. Thus, as it is for College-based activities, students are required to meet any costs associated with the placements (travel/subsistence) and that they have appropriate motor insurance if using a car to travel to and from a placement.

#### Attendance Policy for all Students

At each stage of the course, students will be required to undertake 15 hours of clinical observations, which is mandatory and a requirement for progression to the next stage of the course. CICM will monitor clinical observations attendance for all students. To assist us in this, we ask Approved Practitioners to complete a short form (Appendix B) to confirm the hours undertaken and number of patients observed by the student in your practice.

If students are unable to attend an arranged observations session with you due to sickness, poor weather conditions or other reason, they are asked to notify you at the earliest opportunity.

#### Problems Arising on Placement

Should you have any concerns regarding the observations placements, these should normally be directed initially to the Programme Lead for Research and Reflective Practice (Roz Gibbs) or the Projects Administrator (Ruth Wood). Most minor problems can be resolved by immediate consultation with students, Approved Practitioners and/or appropriate members of CICM staff. If, however, a more persistent or serious problem is highlighted, Fitness to Practice or other relevant College or BAcC procedures may need to be followed.

#### Contact List

Programme Lead for Research & Reflective Practice:

Roz Gibbs [rgibbs@cicm.org.uk](mailto:rgibbs@cicm.org.uk)

Clinical Observations Placement Administrator:

Ruth Wood [rwood@cicm.org.uk](mailto:rwood@cicm.org.uk)