



Work-Based Experience (WBE) Handbook

Health and Social Work

**Supporting Learners in their Acquisition of Knowledge,
Skills and Attitudes for the Provision of Quality Care and
Service Delivery in Health and Social Work**

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1.0 List of Abbreviations

WBE: Work Based Experience

NIHSS: National Institute of Health Social Studies

Practice Area: the work-based area for health settings and social work settings where learners are placed for practical attachment.

Organization: Ministry responsible for Health and Social Work and related private entities accepting learners for WBE.

Immediate Supervisor: Any person assigned to supervise learners when performing any activity/ procedures.

Practice Area Supervisor: The senior person assuming leadership position of the practice area.

WBE Coordinator: A senior lecturer or Program leader assuming the roles and responsibilities of organizing, coordinating and evaluating of WBE activities at NIHSS.

2.0 Introduction

Work-Based Experience (WBE) is an essential component of all training programs. It is crucial in the preparation of learners as they earn competencies required for their effective functioning in their chosen profession. The Competency-Based Approach (CBA) of teaching and learning implies that WBE accounts for substantial percentage of total hours of the respective training program thus making it compulsory for all learners to successfully complete the WBE experience and practical hours as one of the major criteria for certification. WBE is to be implemented as a joint venture between NIHSS and practice settings within different governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations which support health and social work learner's development at different stages of training. This provides a wide range of clinical exposures throughout the respective program. The WBE follows the concept of CBA which is considered as, being progressive, warranting the least complex activities to be successfully completed before addressing the more challenging ones.

This handbook provides guidance for health and social professionals' learners undertaking WBE at any health, social and related sites. It contains information and guidelines relating to practical placement prerequisites. The requirements for placement may be subjected to variation relating to specific training programs or practice placement contexts.

It provides clear guidelines for adherence to legislative provisions for learners, NIHSS as the training institution and practice providers. It also depicts compliance with the placement requirements by the practice providers, learners and training institution thus will maximize public value and facilitate the delivery of high quality, consistent, appropriate and efficient health and social services.

2.1 WBE at NIHSS

WBE is defined as structured work experience in a professional work setting during which a learner acquires and applies knowledge, skills and attitudes. It involves the application of learned knowledge, skills and attitudes in an organization related to the learner's area of training (Tertiary Education Commission, 2019). NIHSS envisages WBE as an educational strategy that provides learners a setting where they can enhance their learning, explore career options, and demonstrate their academic, technical, and career readiness skills in real work settings.

WBE is an integral component of all training programs at NIHSS thus is required to be assessed and be recognized appropriately. It provides impetus for health and social work learners to understand and better appreciate real-life experiences and opportunities. Learners can progressively direct their ambition and ascertain their career path as they move on their training. Work based practice provides learners the opportunity to meet and network with health and social work professional to show case their talents and attributes and also to discover future potentials within these sectors. Learners are provided with the opportunity to apply theoretical aspects to real life environment in health and social work settings so as to acquire and refine skills required to best cope with the complexity and challenges of the respective profession.

3.0 Learning Outcomes

The outcomes of WBE relate that:

- i. The basis of CBA training programs requires that theory and practice attain similar importance, therefore the learning outcomes from each course of our health and social programs will be applicable during WBE in the different practice settings.
- ii. The learners' competencies require appropriate assessment to determine their ability to practice safely through the application of theoretical knowledge and desired attitude to skills development while in practice settings.
- iii. Learners are obliged to show progressive acquisition of essential skills as they undertake WBE and eventually make a smooth and gradual transition into practice as a well-adapted professional.
- iv. Learners on practice will benefit from support, guidance, coaching and skills evaluation from the WBE Coordinator, respective program leader, lecturers, preceptors and personals of the practice areas to enhance their learning outcomes.
- v. Learners will develop responsibility, control and ownership in attaining WBE requirements as depicted by each placement guideline. It is anticipated that a professional relationship and engagement between the learner and assigned professional(s) is attained on a mutual basis. This is essential to accumulate skills, experiences and eventually attained dexterity and competencies.
- vi. Learners will complete all relevant course works and documentation according to the program level and expectations of the NIHSS in a timely manner.
- vii. WBE provide learners with opportunity to develop interpersonal skill and ability to function and interact with respective professional team members, and the community.
- viii. It will also provide opportunities to obtain, use evidence-based knowledge, critical abilities and reflective skills to make optimal decision to address and resolve work-based challenges.
- ix. Learners will appreciate the legal and ethical implication of the respective profession and of the practice area.
- x. Learners are expected to demonstrate professional attitudes and behavior towards all parties involved, namely; all cadres of practice areas, supervisors, colleagues, patients/clients.

4.0 Structure of WBE

The WBE layout must denote a gradual increase in duration and intensity as learners will move on the program; progressing from the least to the most complex exposure applying the concept "from novice to expert". Most of the training programs offered at NIHSS are at Diploma levels, dictating in all learners enrolled on such programs to follow a standardize WBE requirements as being illustrated by the table below, same is being supported by curricula validation body of Seychelles.

4.1 WBE across Diploma Programs at NIHSS

	Duration in weeks	Duration in hours	% per semester	Year / Semester
WBE Stage 1	2	70	3.4%	1 / 1
WBE Stage 2	5	175	8.5%	1 / 2
WB Stage 3	8	290	14.2%	2 / 1
WBE Stage 4	11	395	19.3%	2 / 2
WBE Stage 5	14	510	25%	3 / 1
WBE Stage 6	6	600	29.4%	3 / 2
TOTAL	56	2040	53%	3 / 6

The areas of clinical placement will be in accordance with relevant learning and teaching outcomes of the respective program. A variety of facilities of primary, secondary and tertiary levels of care or service delivery will form the WBE settings. Practical sites for WBE will also include affiliated industries and organizations in private sectors depending on the nature of the respective program. The specificity of the training programs will justify the involvement of governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing work-based opportunities.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 WBE Coordinator

- i. Ensure that the WBE placement documents such as; allocation plan, learning objective and assessment forms are prepared and assemble. WBE documentation / booklet are prepared and made available to the learner within the first few weeks on the study block.
- ii. Prepare and display the allocation/placement plan in a timely manner to ensure the learners can access it on time before placement.

- iii. Explain WBE plan, objectives, activities and support strategies to learners at the beginning of the study block and same are reinforced before learners are released for placement.
- iv. Explain the plan for practice and assessments, tracking of WBE activities, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involve inclusive of the learners.
- v. Meet with the practice area supervisor prior of learner's allocation to discuss the WBE plan, objectives and activities along with anticipated support system for learners during WBE.
- vi. Prepare and disseminate the work base package including the cover letters, allocation plan, learning objective, practice evaluation forms are provided to the work base area at least one week before learners present for WBE
- vii. Ensure that learners develop and follow individual plan for work-based training in line with actual WBE learning objectives
- viii. Ensures that tutors covering work base activities maintain an activity log; same is signed by unit supervisor then submitted to WBE coordinator by the end of each placement. This provides evidence of work base activities, provides practice hours for tutor's licensure and support mitigation of learner's grievances as appropriate.

5.2 Practice Area Supervisor

- i. Act as the linkage between the practice unit and NIHSS thus communicates information to learners on the unit and vice-versa.
- ii. Ensure learners are undergo an induction and orientation to practice area, specific procedures and guidelines of the respective practice unit
- iii. Ensure that learners provide and follow individual plan for work-based learning in line with actual WBE learning objectives.
- iv. Provide guidance, support, coaching and are appropriately groom learners so as to become an effective, well-adjusted functioning personnel within the practice settings.
- v. Oversee that rostering of learners are in conformity to training and labour organization requirements as per learner's status (relating to shift hours, day offs and night shift).
- vi. Ensure that learners abide to practice unit guidelines and procedure such as punctuality, absenteeism, clinical attires, and work schedules etc....
- vii. Oversee learner's attendance and work-based requirements are respected by all parties (students, work-based units)
- viii. Attends to learners' grievances and assist with mediation within practice settings.
- ix. Provide feedback relating to learner's performances and other related issues to WBE coordinator or lecturers working with the learners.
- x. Ensures that all WBE documentations are completed and signed on time for submission.

5.3 Learners

- i. Learners will develop an individualized learning plan and contract including; self-learning objectives, activities and assessment dates prior of proceeding on placement.
- ii. Communicate learning and assessment plan, learning objectives and other WBE documents on the first day of allocation to the head of the respected unit

- iii. Attend the WBE attachments throughout the schedule, follow the working hours of the unit they are placed at ;(in terms scheduled duty, days off, authorized leave etc..).
- iv. Present themselves in a professional and appropriate manner, whereby their conduct, dress code and attitudes reflect the values and principles of health and social work professions and that of NIHSS.
- v. Engage in work-base activities under the supervision of practice staff in order to enrich their learning experiences.
- vi. Complete the necessary tasks and activities as reflected in their learning objectives.
- vii. Plan and successfully complete all practical assessment activities according to WBE objectives.
- viii. Learners must confirm assessment plan and cancelation with respective assessors at least 12 hours in advance.
- ix. Access to work-base /unit rules guidelines and regulations.
- x. Abide to work-base/ unit rules, guidelines and regulations.
- xi. Ensure all learning opportunities are taken so as to fully and effectively attain individual's work base learning objectives.
- xii. Ensure WBE documents are completed and signed before the last day of placement.
- xiii. Collect the documents by the last day of placement, sign and submit the document to class lecturer by the given deadline.

6.0 Induction

An induction period spread over three- four hours is essential on the first day on WBE. It is required that all learners participate in effective orientation before commencing placement in any practice area. The WBE Coordinator assisted by the program leader will provide placement information and requirements prior of learners going on placement. The practice supervisor is required to provide orientation to the practice site, policies, guidelines and procedures as relates to the particular unit. This provides learners with information to facilitate adaptation and a sense of partnership with the staffs. This period is essential for clarification of doubts, sharing of expected learning plans and outcomes for both levels; the learners and staff. It is a strategy to minimize learners' feelings of aloofness thus influences their learning experiences very early. Learners will receive orientation on a series of domains as follows:

- Background and purpose of respective practice area including its specific objectives, its mission and vision.
- Specific routines of the practice area
- Communication channel for routines occurrences, addressing learners 'requests and grievances
- Organization hierarchy (staff levels/ ranking)
- Duty shifts, roistering or scheduling
- Internal procedures relating to staff, infection control, incidents, work ethics and grievances.
- Orientation of setting layouts and facilities available (touring the setting area)

- Procedures to follow in cases of emergency and when addressing client's or patient's issues
- Possible work challenges and risk factors learners may be exposed to.
- Expectations of learner relating to learning outcomes or objectives.

7.0 Evaluation of WBE

The evaluation of learners' WBE is an important aspect to determine if the learning objectives have been met and to identify possible deficits so as to redirect clinical learning strategies. The evaluation of WBE will focus on aspects of knowledge and skills application along with the acquisition of desired attitudes in relation to the level of training and program expectation.

WBE will be evaluated continually and on completion of the attachment from each practice area. Designated staff, preceptors, supervisors and lecturers involve in practical teaching of learners will share the responsibility of ensuring proper documentation of all learning activities, practical assessments and other related documents in line with the learner's work base booklet.

All documentations relating to learner's WBE must be properly filled, along with remarks of achievements, under performances and attitudes. The WBE documents must be signed by both parties (i.e. Practice Area Supervisor and learner).

Completed documents must be returned to respective lecturer for grading on scheduled date after the completion of WBE.

The WBE allocation for each semester carries certain weighting or percentage that is accrued over the duration of the program. Learners will be required to complete the different requirements as they progress on the respective program. It is compulsory that they attain all the requirements for a pass mark for each semester.

7.1 WBE Records

These will include combination of the following documents from each practice area. All the required forms will be compiled into the WBE booklet with specific learning objectives of the actual study level of the respective program. Each of the documents included in the WBE carries percentage mark to be attained for each stage of the WBE, respective of the specific training program.

WBE for all programs will be evaluated by rating of these documents yet there will be additional activities for individual program at specific stage of the WBE.

- Activity log sheet or booklet
- Work base evaluation form
- Reflective journal
- Work based assessment grids
- Specific projects guideline
- Procedure or activity sheet

8.0 Professional Conduct

Health related and social work professions are rooted on professional values and principles. Learners undertaking these lines of training must abide to these values and principles. They have the duty to apply them in every aspect of their work and services being provided. They are expected to be groomed so as to eventually demonstrate and safeguard these professional conducts throughout their career life. Different forms/ level of supervision will be ensured by the supervisor / designated staff to safe guard the supernumerary status of learner

Confidentiality: Learners will hold in confidence all delicate and sensitive information relating to patients/ clients and their management. In the event of breaching confidentiality appropriate disciplinary action (s) will be applied as guided by the student handbook.

Competent: Learners will at all times strive for competence and perform assigned tasks to the best of their abilities as expected based on their level of training on the respective program.

Accountability: Learners will progressively demonstrate accountability and answerability for their actions and omissions based on their level of training.

Responsibility: Learners will progressively demonstrate responsibility for their actions and omissions based on their level of training.

8.1 Code of Conduct

Learners have the duty to apply the code of conduct in every aspect of their work and services being provided. They are expected to be groomed so as to eventually demonstrate and safeguard these individual and professional conducts throughout their career life and beyond. These code of conducts must be applied towards; patients/ clients, service, colleagues, unit staffs and other professionals.

Respect: learners must demonstrate respectfulness towards all people within and outside the health settings at all times. All people requiring health services must be treated with humility and dignity regardless of age, gender, racial, social and religious status.

Tolerance: Is a professional virtue that must be uphold by the learners at all times and in all settings. Learners must demonstrate patience in all that they do towards all within the work settings and beyond.

Honesty: Learners must tell the truth of actions and omissions of care and service delivery. Telling truth will impact the health of patients or clients and prevent or limit delayed decisions thus create space for immediate actions /interventions to positively influence health outcomes. Telling the truth influences positive work environment and team building.

Empathy: Being in service delivery domains, learners must embrace the feelings of others thus can learn to demonstrate understanding and empathy towards all that they do within the work settings and beyond. Learners learn to ‘fit in the shoes of others’ so as to be able to do to

others what they would want others to do for them. Empathy is an initial step towards empowering others to attain self-dependence and resourcefulness.

8.2 General Behavior

At all times learners must behave in a professional manner towards all cadres of staffs, fellow learners, clients /patients: service users, regardless of age, gender, cultural, religious and political affiliation. A culture of assertiveness, humility and belonging is imperative towards attaining a shared vision and mission in health, social and affiliated fields.

8.3 Work Attitude and Behavior

Learners will be working in a variety of settings, each with its own challenges and opportunities. Consequently the nature of the work expects that learners work as an active and integrated team member. Learners are expected to work outside usual working hours, night shifts, weekends and public holidays, depending on the specific program. The WBE Coordinator will be responsible to guide practice settings on the frequency and pattern of shift duties in relation to respective programs.

General work attitude includes;

- Learners need to always show enthusiasm and eagerness to learn from the work activities they are assigned to do.
- Learners need to give priority to the time, attention and preparation to undertake assigned work.
- **Confidentiality and privacy of information:** learners will have access to a range of confidential information, they are required to hold in confidence all clients' information and remain discrete when disclosing any records in the provision of service and care. Learners will only access files and records related to the patients/ clients being attended to and under the authorization of the unit supervisor.

9.0 Attendance and Punctuality

Learners will need to attend **a minimum of 90%** of WBE hours on each of the allocated work unit as one condition to obtain a pass mark for the WBE. It must be appreciated that the WBE provides for clinical/ practice knowledge application of theory to strengthen learners' learning and skill acquisition. Learners will need to abide to work schedule time according to the functions of the respective practice unit. Learners not attaining at least 90% of WBE hours will face possibility of repeating the work placement during non-school hours as and when NIHSS feels feasible.

Note: This will be considered on a case by case basis and depending on the availability of supervisors from practice areas.

Learners must not be absent from work and unit unless they are authorized to do so, any absence must be justified by a signed medical or official document. They must inform their supervisor on the practice area within **twenty-four hours** either by phone or electronically.

Alteration/ amendments to schedule duties will be considered by the in-charge/ supervisor only on prior requests and in cases of genuine emergencies. Same is subjected for discussion on a case by case situation.

All absenteeism will need to be justified by an official document. It remains the responsibility of the learner to inform the in-charge/ supervisor of any absenteeism by phone as earliest possible within the scheduled shift.

Failing in providing official documents to justify the absenteeism period will warrant to forfeiting of day (s) off. NIHSS will be informed of all absenteeism and appropriate disciplinary measures including refunding of hours and warning letters will be applied. **Refunding of hours will be done according to the time negotiated by WBE Coordinator and the respective placement area.**

Learners are expected to report on duty on time and leave the work unit only when authorized to do so. Late attendance(s) will be document on the work base evaluation forms, supported by valid document. Repeated late attendances will be considered for disciplinary action by the work unit supervisor. Same will be communicated to the WBE coordinator or the respective program leader.

Any movement out of the respective unit will be considered following the authorization of the supervisor of the shift or his/ her representative as designated.

10.0 Learner Support

Learners will be provided with at least one to two hours per week as contact supervision by any support personnel.

Depending on the area of attachment, plans for practical procedures and assessments of the learner; the timing and duration of visit will be subjected to modification in relation to duration and frequency.

Learners are encouraged to maintain contact with WBE Coordinator, respective tutor (s) and preceptor through phone and face-to face contact as needed. A designated staff member on the practice area will be responsible of learner's issues in the absence of the unit supervisor.

11.0 Supervisory Visit

A schedule for supervisory visit will be provided to learner during the induction period. Supervision of learners will be conducted on an individual and group basis. Supervision will be done as either direct or indirect modes depending on learner's level of training, level of autonomy and complexity of tasks and activities.

12.0 Preceptorship

NIHSS is in the process of setting up a preceptorship program for all learners in 2021. All learners will benefit from at least one to two hours of preceptoring weekly. Identified preceptors will be available on the respective practice setting to provide guidance, support and ensure learner's learning objectives and plan are attained fully thus serving as an anchorage and buffer for learners during their WBE. This is essential to curb down on periods of aloofness and apprehension. Preceptors and preceptees must maintain a professional relationship at all times with both sides assuming agreed responsibilities in line with teaching and learning. All preceptoring activities will be documented and acknowledged by both parties as guided.

13.0 Attires

All learners will be provided with appropriate attires for WBE in line with the requirements of the respective practice area. Learners must at all times ensure cleanliness and tidiness of the work base attires.

Learners must at all times carry on them their identification badge; same must be made visible to all service users.

Learners using clinical uniforms must ensure that these are worn completely. Clinical uniforms are worn on clinical units only; learners must not be allowed to walk around outside work settings in clinical uniforms. Where no uniform is being worn, learners must always be dressed in a professional manner and as directed by the respective practice area.

Wearing of casual clothing, thighs, clothes with advertising slogans, slippers, and excessive jewelries are not allowed during working hours. Only authorized head gears are permitted on work unit based on justification.

14.0 WBE Regulations and Policies

Learners must at all times abide to rules, regulations and policies of the respective work place and organization. The student handbook of NIHSS and the WBE manual will be served as reference documents when addressing learner's issues and attitudes issues.

Staff training on WBE documents, handbook and WBE manual will be ensured prior to the learners' allocation on the respective work base settings.

15.0 Incidents

Learners undertaking practice placements must ensure their own safety and comply with policies and guidelines addressing health and safety on the respective area. Learners exposed to any health-related hazards, involved in incidents causing bodily harm and undue mental stress to self, colleagues and patients must report of such incident promptly to the immediate work place supervisor.

A verbal report may be accompanied by a written report as per request of the supervisor in accordance with policies or guidelines being implemented by the practice area.

Upon request for an incident report, student will be obliged to comply; a copy of the report must be forwarded to the WBE Coordinator. The report must be signed by student and be endorsed by the practice area supervisor, inclusive of action (s) taken. The situation will be further analyzed by the WBE Coordinator. When appropriate; action (s) or support will be provided under the guidance of the management team of NIHSS.

The work base area manager has the duty to inform learners of emergency strategies and evacuation plan including emergency numbers and codes as fitted for the respective work base area.

Health and Safety incidents include:

- Hazards such as equipment faults, chemical, toxic compositions and radiation
- Incidents with bodily injury or harm and stress related; sharp injuries, physical trauma, falls, mismanagement, verbal abuse, physical and sexual harassment etc...
- Others including; medication errors, clients grievances, confidentiality issues, behavior and attitude issues.

16.0 Insurance

All learners enrolled with NIHSS fall under the cooperate insurance policy for the institution. The insurance provides protection against personal accident resulting in bodily injuries and death associated to the delivery of duties during the WBE in local context. The insurance policy applies only on occupational basis within the Republic of Seychelles. Exclusion are: illnesses not related to work, self- inflicted harm, accidents incurred under the influence of illicit drugs including alcohol, pregnancy, acquisition of blood born infections such as HIV /AIDS and Hepatitis infection.

17.0 Channel of Communication

The coordinator/ supervisor of the practical area bears responsibility of the students on their work place. Learners will address all communication relating to practice issues to the work place manager or immediate supervisor when appropriate. Issues of academic and practice requirements will fall under the responsibility of the WBE Coordinator in agreement of the respective unit supervisor. The WBE Coordinator will act as the spokesperson and liaison between NIHSS and practice areas. Communication will be through formal media including: phone calls, e-mail, letters, circular and memos.

18.0 Supernumerary Status of Learner

Learners' status on WBE is supernumerary: they are not included as the established staff for the practice areas. It must be appreciated that they do have limitations in decision making, knowledge inadequacy accompanied by not yet attained dexterity with practice skills. They are

not to assume total accountability for their practice so warranting that they practice under the supervision of a qualified staff. The level and style of supervision will vary based on the level of training and type of procedure being undertaken. The level of risk for the learner and the service recipient are essential consideration of the practice staff thus must be used to determine the level of supervision to be given.

19.0 Protocol for Progression

NIHSS is implementing CBA: a progressive learning approach, thus less complex activities are completed prior to the more complex ones. The same concept is applied to WBE: so learners are required to meet each placement requirements as one of the basis for progression on the program. This clearly depicts that learners must attain the required percentage of WBE for each semester as an essential criterion for progression on the respective program.

20.0 Extension of WBE

The practice of repeating WBE must be discouraged as much as possible.

Repeating of WBE will be considered only in special circumstances on a one to one basis when the Academic team of NIHSS has approve of the duration and plan for repeating. This will be in agreement with the availability of venue and support from practice settings.

21.0 Appeal

Learners who are not satisfied with decisions taken regarding their WBE results or placement may appeal this decision by writing a letter addressed to the Programme Coordinator through the WBE Coordinator. The letter should outline the circumstances which they believe decisions taken have impacted their performance or placement on WBE.

22.0 Recognition of WBE

WBE is a graded component of all training programs at NIHSS. Each phase will carry certain percentage total out of 100 % on completion of the program.

All the components of the learners' achievement on each WBE stage will be graded and recorded on the learner's profile for each semester and the final training transcript.

Learners will need to attain at least 90% of WBE requirement for each training phase as one criterion for progression.

NIHSS will recognize and award a learner from each training program as Best in practice during the yearly graduation.

WBE grades will be included as one criterion when selecting the outstanding/ overall performance of NIHSS for the yearly graduation award.

23.0 References

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