

The achievement of EU requirements for clinical exposure to medicine and gynaecology conditions is facilitated by arranging short supervised “Spoke” placements to relevant services or clinics during your normal midwifery “Hub” placements. Students are expected to observe and, where appropriate, participate in the care of patients in that setting who are experiencing medical or gynaecological conditions.

When should I start arranging spoke visits?

You may arrange spoke visits during a normal midwifery or neonatal placements from the beginning of Semester 2, year 2. We advise you arrange your spokes during community, neonatal or postnatal placements – avoid using delivery suite time or other short placements.

You should discuss your plan for achieving your medicine and gynaecology spokes with your Academic Assessor (AcAs), during your progression point interview at the end of semester 1

When do I need to have completed by spoke placements?

You are normally expected to complete your ‘spokes’ by the end of year two, however, spokes may be undertaken in year 3 if necessary – discuss this with your AcAs. All statutory requirements must be completed prior to commencing any year 3 elective placements outside our partner NHS Trusts.

How many spoke visits or shifts do I need to do?

Students must work the equivalent of six half-day ‘sessions’ in a gynaecology placement (3 days in total) and six half-day sessions in a medical placement (3 days in total). **The overall hours worked should equal approx. 22.5 hours (a normal clinical week) for each.** A session is defined as a morning, an afternoon or an evening.

How do I arrange my spoke visits?

Ask your Practice Supervisor / Assessor about relevant spokes available in the Trust/Community area – see also the list in the students’ placement handbook (You should be given a copy of this as you start each new placement). To minimise disruption to midwifery supervision, try to arrange your spokes when your Practice Supervisor is either a day off, on study leave or on annual leave, so discuss and agree your spoke plans with your Practice Supervisor prior to attending.

You should attempt to arrange your spoke visits yourself (phone up and ask who to speak to about this) but you can also seek help from the Practice Education Facilitators (PEF) in the Trust to facilitate this process.

Do I need to prepare for my spoke visits?

Yes, you should read about the relevant speciality, formulate some learning objectives for yourself and prepare some questions for the staff. This will help you present as someone who is keen to learn and will help you get the most from your experience. Asking relevant questions will help your spoke Practice Supervisor meet your learning needs.

What else do I need to do to stay safe and keep others safe whilst on spoke visits?

You should have attended statutory updating in relation to safe moving and handling techniques and should be fully aware of your responsibilities in this matter. As always, you are instructed not to engage in handling procedures that do not strictly comply with current Trust policies.

You should have attended mandatory infection control updates. You should practice all standard precautions and follow any additional instructions from the staff if caring for patients with a specific infection risk. You should be fully aware of the department's infection control policy with respect to source isolation and standard precautions.

How should I be supervised during my spoke visits?

You should gain your clinical experience of Medicine/Gynaecology conditions at the level of Exposure (observation) and Participation, but note; participation should only occur under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or midwife familiar with the patient's needs. **You should decline to undertake new activities for which you have not received appropriate instruction.**

If you arrange to work a shift on a ward area specialising in gynaecology or medicine, you should be orientated to the ward area at the beginning of that shift to meet statutory health and safety requirements.

You should always be supernumerary (in addition to normal staffing levels) during spoke placement but you should be recorded on the ward off-duty with a named registered professional identified to supervise you.

Is this activity assessed?

No formal clinical assessment is required but it is your responsibility to arrange your spoke visits and record your experiences and learning. Your AcAs will monitor that the relevant experience has been achieved. Students will not be able to complete the programme and register as a midwife if the gynaecology and medicine experience is not achieved by the end of year 3.

What do I need to record about my spoke visits?

You must record a brief summary of your experiences and your learning in the Midwifery Related Activity Hours section on PARE

You should also record information in your Statutory Experience Record (White Book) about individuals you have cared for or observed receiving care within the following sections – get these signed on the day:

- **Care of Women with Gynaecological Conditions**
- **Care of Women with Medical Conditions.**
- **Care of women in the field of surgery (eg if you attend Gynae theatres)**

These sections may also include women you have cared for within the maternity services who have medical or gynaecological conditions.

Progress with completing these sections should be reviewed by your AcAs at each OAR meeting. The onus is on you to ensure that these sections are updated regularly and completed before the end of the programme.

How do I record my attendance?

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Having recorded your experiences (as above), you must then ask your midwifery Practice Supervisor / Assessor to confirm your attendance at the spoke (they can look at your PARE entries and ask you about the visit as evidence of attendance in the spoke areas for Medicine or Gynaecology) and sign off your hours as part of the weekly recording of your midwifery hours. You should add note about where you went the using the “Add/Edit Note” facility on the timesheet. Students should note the following:

- a) Date of spoke placement.
- b) Name of spoke placement.
- c) Name of overseeing spoke Practice Supervisor.

Your AcAs will review these records to ensure compliance with **EU Directive 2005/36/Article40**.

What counts as a suitable spoke visit?

Different Trusts offer different learning experiences, so you need to ask around about what is available within that Trust.

Examples of suitable gynae spoke placements include:

- Early Pregnancy Units (EPU`s)
- Colposcopy clinics and Urodynamic Clinics.
- Gynaecology Theatre (We strongly recommend you try to arrange a day / half day in this area).
- Gynaecology ward (Do a 7.5hr shift)

Examples of suitable medical spoke placements include:

- Diabetic and other metabolic disorder clinics (Can include a day with a diabetes specialist midwife)
- Cardiac clinics
- Renal clinics
- Neurological clinics
- Adult intensive care unit
- Cancer treatment centres
- Accident and emergency

Note, all spokes must relate to the care of adults - not babies or children.

Can I attend other spokes that are not related to medicine or gynaecology?

Yes, you can arrange other spokes as long as they are relevant to your midwifery skills assessments. You should discuss the relevance with your AcAs or Practice Supervisor / Assessor.

Note that other surgical care placements are not appropriate as medical spoke experience but will still be valuable and can be recorded in the same way.