Evaluation of student practicum placement activities and skills

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Currently students within a clinical exercise physiology degree program undertake up to 500 hours of practicum, with these hours recorded in paper-based logbooks. The practicum hours must meet strict accreditation requirements regarding the task-based category of all hours (i.e. 65% category A: face-to-face exercise service delivery). Due to the cumbersome and retrospective nature of the current logbooks and the minimal guidance provided by the accreditation body for intended learning outcomes, logbooks, and therefore the practicum experiences, are typically assessed on the basis of ensuring that the requisite hours are met, with little consideration of the embedded experience. Pilot reviewing of a small sample of completed logbooks indicates that hours are often inaccurately logged across the practicum categories, and this may impact on the student learning experience as there is no opportunity for remedial action. The proposed project will retrospectively map two years of logged practicum hours against the course learning outcomes and accreditation requirements in order to identify gaps between expected practicum outcomes and the actual student learning experience. The outcomes will provide the critical groundwork for the development and implementation of an interactive, real-time online placement learning system to monitor actual student placement experiences.

Keywords: practicum, log-books, learning outcomes, accreditation