



# LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

**Centre for Academic Innovation  
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**Three - challenges / issues/ anxieties /  
roadblocks/ realities/ scenarios / case studies**

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# Our experiences: *some context*

***PSRB programme:*** Mandatory 40 week placement  
(clinical – NHS or commercial (1:1))

***Widespread placements:*** North to south

***Demographic:*** 95% non-white

***Gender:*** 60% female 40% male

***Geography and community:*** East / West Mids. = 2/3

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# Experiences, challenges:

- family concern
- well-being
- engagement
- behaviour on placement FTP
- student voice
- placement feedback
- learning and employability
- work experience
- students with disabilities



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# Placements are emotional:

*Travel time*

*Locations*

*Away from home*

*Family commitment*

*Cultural difference*

*Access to faith*

*Access to dietary need*

*Racist attitudes*

*Departments expecting too much*

*Making friends*

*Being accepted*

*Full-time working*

*Summer holidays*

*Not being ready*

*Dress codes*

*Prayer*

*Mixing with others*

*Rude patients*

*Gender*

*Familiarity*

*Like / dislike*

*Discrimination*

*community*

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# Lack of a tangible tool-kit / national guidance

PSRB programme

HE Occupational practitioners – No Audiology guidance

National bodies for the profession

Practicing equanimity

Student involvement – allocation

Impact on student peer – peer relationships

Impact on staff / student relationships

Impact on staff



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# Embedding Mental Wellbeing & Course Specific Initiatives

- Embedded workshops to support student wellbeing & address health inequalities
- Provided by Student Welfare team in conjunction with academic teams - co-creation & delivery
- Activity focused; linking in to university support systems & personal development options
- Part of institution-wide Healthy DMU programme
- QAA Embedding Mental Wellbeing: Methods & Benefits
- CATE award winner 2022



## Our approach:



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# Our approach: engagement through anonymity

- Gauge opinion
- Encourage discussion
- Voice concerns (place of safety)

*(Vallely, Gibson 2018)*

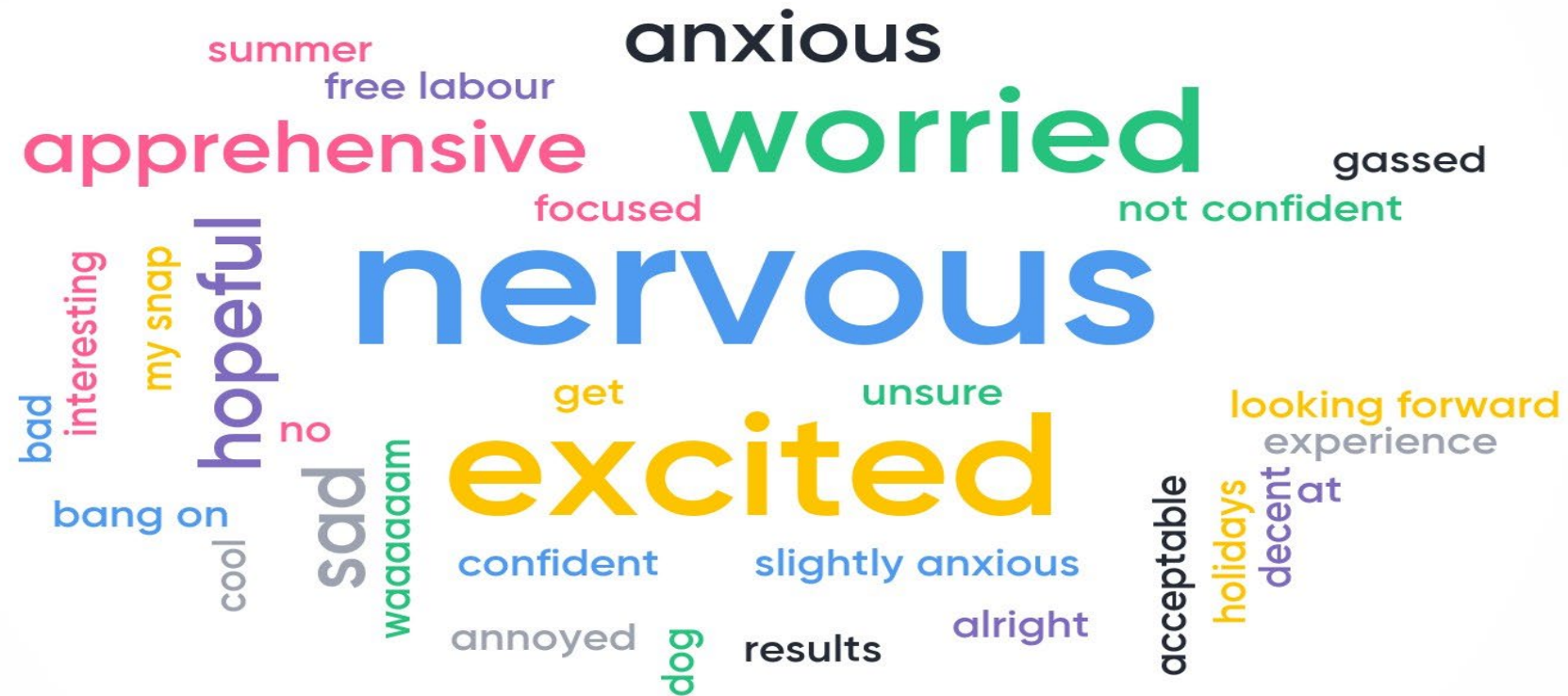
- *Real-time responses*
- *Respond to salient issues*
- *Learn from lived experience*
- *Take appropriate actions*
- *Info-giving to curiosity building*



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# Describe how you feel about placements



30

# Tell us your questions and concerns about going on to placement

How do you handle the responsibility of a patient alone in your care?

Do we get paid for placement, are we going by ourselves, what if I don't know what I'm doing clinically?

What should I do about feeling worried about leaving home and having to start somewhere new?

Do get we Eid off?

What if you don't feel comfortable going to an area like Exeter?

Where do I have to go to and how to cope

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# Tell us your questions and concerns about going on to placement

Commuting if I can't move out, finding parking space, finding time to pray in between at placement, how much time will I get to study, having exams, not knowing how to do what's asked of me, not having the clinical know-how

How did you fit in with a new team, what kind of things did you have to do to fit in?

Do placement providers allow staff / students to pray in working hours?

Scared that I will be discriminated against or that patients will refuse treatment because of my hijab

Do you have to pay for accommodation, how much?

How far away will I have to go and how many days off do I have?

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# Questions and concerns: themes

## Identity:

Fear of change

Seeking belonging

## Balance:

Fear of competing demands

How to cope and make ends meet

## Discrimination:

Fear of exposure

How to secure support

## Ability:

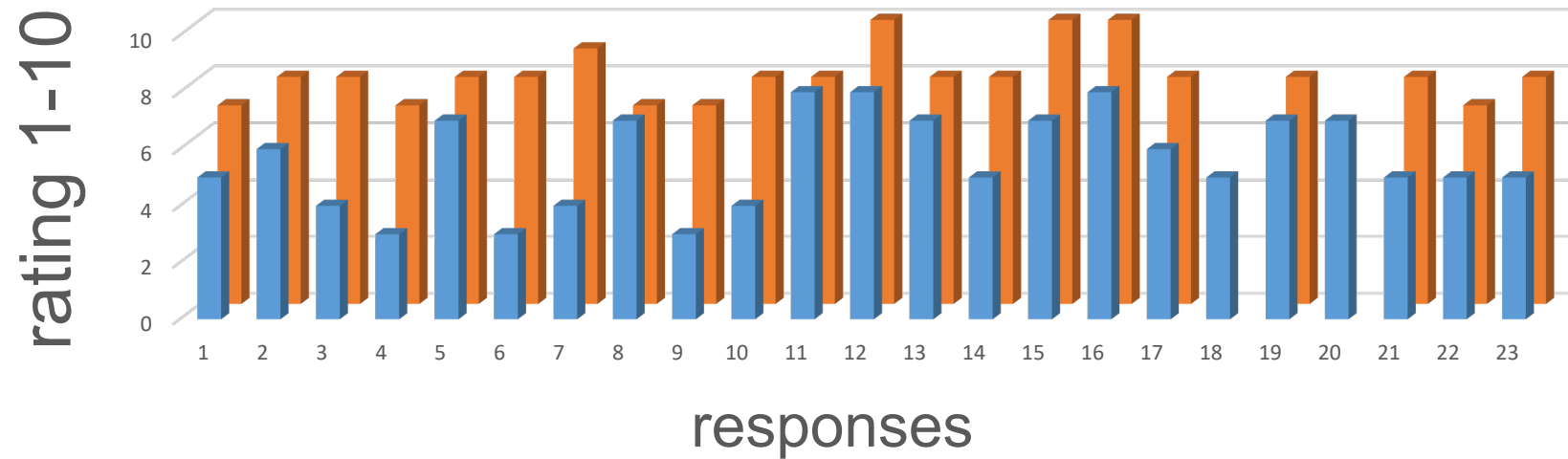
Fear of not being good enough

Seeking out help and taking responsibility

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# How confident do you feel about placement?

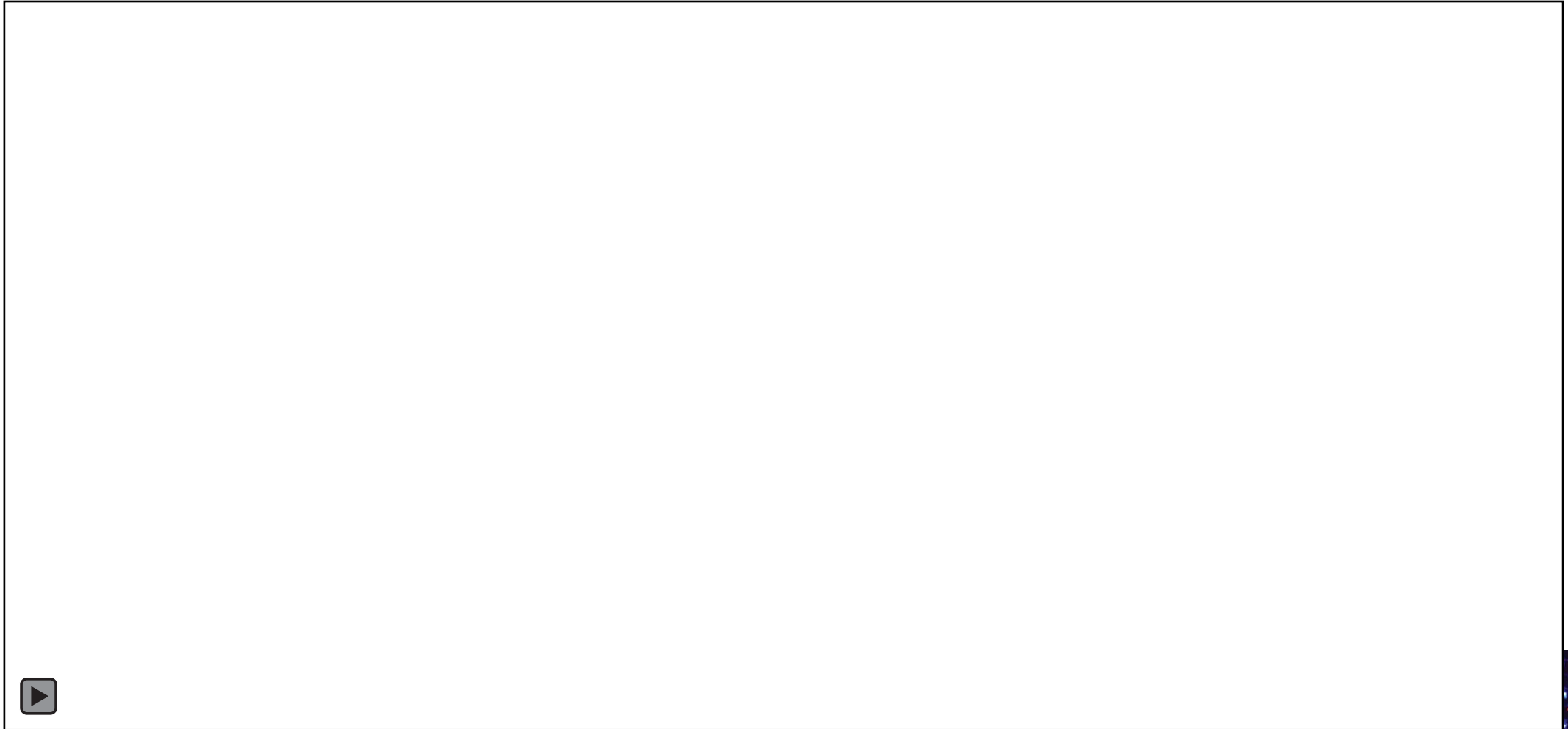


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# Reflections



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- **Student confidence is key to placement success:**
- Stressed students appear less confident = appear less competent (*Groebecker, 2015*)
- **Mentoring (in situ) is vital:**
- Smooth transition
- Conscious effort = student's sense of belonging and place (*Levett-Jones, 2009*)
- **Sense of belonging is key to reaching potential:**
- Students need to feel welcome and valued (*Marchant, 2021*)

# Our learning

**Near-peer** power

Location homework

Emotions and building curiosity

Disclosure and disability (building this in)

Wider implications for teaching, learning and Audiology

Supporting our stakeholders

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## Embedding Mental Wellbeing: Methods and Benefits Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021

A panel approach to reducing anxiety and improving confidence in undergraduate healthcare students embarking on clinical placement

Charlotte Rogers, De Montfort University  
Rachel Davies, De Montfort University  
Robert Frost, De Montfort University



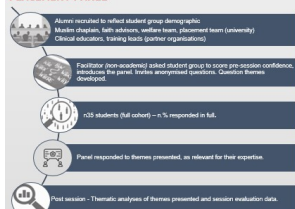
'Placement panel' for the confident transition of  
Audiology undergraduates from campus to work-based  
learning

Rogers, C., Davies, R., Frost, R.  
Collaborative Enhancement Project 2021, De Montfort University Leicester  
Embedding mental wellbeing, De Montfort University Leicester

### INTRODUCTION

- Clinical placement can be a daunting prospect that looms in the term of the second year. Students can feel fearful and apprehensive, leading to different behaviours, such as drugs in attendance or upset about the need to move away from home. Locations vary across the breadth of England and some students will be required to move to new accommodation for the whole of their placement.
- Placement experience develops the healthcare student toward early professional status (www.2020). Understanding gained on the importance of person-centred care, professional attitudes and skills closes the distance between learnt theory and live practice.
- Student confidence is key to placement success. Stressed students appear less confident in their knowledge, learning, skills and abilities, they are also often deemed to be less competent (www.2016).
- Practice educator mentoring, support and engagement is key to creating smooth transition and development of student's sense of belonging (www.2016).
- Placement Panel sees a shift and gear change to greater understanding, reduction in anxiety and growing excitement for placement as an opportunity for a deeper learning experience and gaining valuable experience, rather than something to be strategically managed to pass a programme of study.

### PLACEMENT PANEL



### RESULTS

Mean confidence levels increased by 40% post placement panel experience:



Four overarching themes present in the questions posed by students to the panel:

#### 1. Identity, change and representation

- Placement geographical location may be somewhere unfamiliar. Students worry about how they will live and function in places where they feel they are different or isolated as others.
- The team in placement may be from a different culture and have different attitudes and opinions.
- Students wish to be accepted and 'blend' by other members of the placement team and hope to find a sense of belonging and make new social bonds and friendships.
- How to show the department your abilities and grow your skills in the best light.
- The best way to practice personal faith in the workplace.
- How to balance placement policy regarding uniform or dress code with dressing modestly in accordance with personal faith.
- Career options for the future and understanding the difference between practising in the public v. private sector.

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#### 2. Experiencing discrimination

- Students wish to know if others have experienced racism in clinic.
- How have others experienced racist attitudes from patients and how have they managed this issue.
- How frequently this has occurred and how others have felt about the experience.
- What is in place to support the student on placement and what to do in this situation.

#### 3. Work / life balance

- Financial worries. Audiology students have no access to the learning support fund that other disciplines benefit from. Placement costs are self-funded.
- Access to affordable accommodation, close enough to placement location.
- Understanding what is expected of a student in practice, what departments want from their staff in training.
- How to balance the demands of home, social, academic work and life on placement.

#### 4. Being in a clinical environment

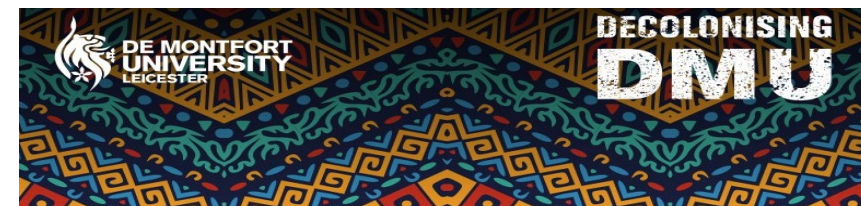
- What to expect across the working day when on placement in the clinic.
- How quickly might the student be expected to learn and be handling their own clinics.
- Being a confident communicator in clinic.
- Managing more difficult situations and complex patients and what support to expect from placement and academic teams.

### KEY LEARNING

- Students value access to the lived experience of alumni through sharing of personal narratives.
- Groups choose to share contact details to develop support and professional networks.
- Panel approaches and student access and understanding.
- The panel provides culturally consistent support and advice for student group.
- Challenging topics were raised through use of informal setting and anonymised question asking.
- A diverse panel offers further representation and reflects diversity of student group.
- Strong partnership with placement providers and education are key to student well-being and reducing anxiety.
- Fostering a sense of belonging on placement begins with guidance, information and mentoring received on campus.
- Confident transition to placement can be enhanced through development of near-peer informal mentoring.
- A panel approach supports student's self-identification with future role as audiology practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  
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1. Rogers, C., Davies, R., Frost, R. (2021) Embedding mental wellbeing: using a panel approach to reduce anxiety and improve confidence in undergraduate healthcare students. *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics*, 46, 1-10.  
2. Rogers, C., Davies, R., Frost, R. (2021) Embedding mental wellbeing: using a panel approach to reduce anxiety and improve confidence in undergraduate healthcare students. *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics*, 46, 1-10.  
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CAITE

Decolonising DMU Toolkit

## Placement experience: The importance of 'belonging'

## Embedding Mental Wellbeing

De Montfort University's Embedding Mental Wellbeing team harnesses the power of academics, professional services and the Students' Union in collaborative partnership to embed mental wellbeing activity across the University. Responding to the University community and the impact of Covid-19, this project has achieved cross-institutional transformation and cross-sector impact.



Year  
2022

Institution  
De Montfort University

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# Useful links and sources

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/learning-and-teaching/embedding-mental-wellbeing#>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/cate-team/embedding-mental-wellbeing>

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