

Clinical Education Policy v.1

MIE Clinical Education Policy

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1. Introduction

At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), we are committed to delivering clinical education that prepares students for excellence in healthcare practice. This policy provides a comprehensive framework for all forms of work-based learning (WBL) and clinical education across MIE's accredited programs, covering both internal clinical placements and external internships. .

MIE's clinical education framework seeks to blend academic knowledge with hands-on clinical practice to produce healthcare professionals who are not only skilled but also compassionate and ethical in their approach to patient care. Our goal is to create an educational environment where students gain the critical competencies needed for the healthcare sector while upholding the values of safety, professionalism, and continuous improvement which applies to both internal and external placements.

While this policy addresses the overarching guidelines and expectations for all clinical education, Section 11 contains specific reference to the QA processes and requirements for external sites, ensuring that these placements meet the same standards as internal ones.

1.1 Scope of the Policy:

This policy applies to all students, faculty, clinical supervisors, placement coordinators, and partner institutions involved in clinical education and WBL at MIE. It sets out clear expectations for each stakeholder, ensuring a shared commitment to the success of our students and the well-being of the patients they serve.

1.2 Key Objectives of Clinical Education at MIE:

- To Develop Competent Professionals: We aim to equip students with the technical and interpersonal skills required to excel in their respective healthcare fields, ensuring that they meet or exceed industry standards.
- To Ensure Patient Safety: All clinical activities are designed to uphold the highest standards of patient care and safety, with strict adherence to ethical and legal guidelines.
- To Foster Interdisciplinary Collaboration: We recognize the importance of working within diverse healthcare teams and encourage collaboration between students and professionals across disciplines.

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- To Support Continuous Learning and Improvement: MIE is dedicated to creating a learning environment that promotes ongoing professional development, critical reflection, and adaptation to new healthcare challenges and innovations.

2. Definition of Clinical Education

At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), clinical education is a cornerstone of our mission to produce healthcare professionals who are well-prepared to meet the challenges of modern patient care. Through structured clinical placements and work-based learning (WBL), students are immersed in healthcare settings where they apply their academic knowledge to patient care, develop essential competencies, and refine their decision-making processes under the guidance of experienced professionals.

2.1 MIE's Commitment to Supporting Learning Through Clinical Education:

MIE actively cultivates a supportive environment where students are guided to become autonomous, reflective practitioners. To support this, MIE provides:

- **Robust Clinical Placements:** Carefully selected clinical sites that meet the highest standards of healthcare practice, where students can safely engage in patient care.
- **Supervised Learning:** Clinical education at MIE is built around strong mentorship, where experienced clinicians supervise students, ensuring that their learning experiences are safe, ethical, and conducive to developing professional skills.
- **Reflective Practice:** MIE emphasizes the importance of reflection in clinical education, encouraging students to critically assess their performance, seek feedback, and apply lessons learned to future patient care.

2.2 Key Stakeholders in Clinical Education at MIE:

- **Students** are at the heart of clinical education, actively engaging in hands-on learning, developing their skills, and gaining confidence in patient management. MIE supports students with clear learning objectives, ongoing feedback, and opportunities for self-reflection.
- **Clinical Tutors and Supervisors** are central to guiding student learning. At MIE, our clinical tutors provide mentorship, assess performance, and help students bridge the gap between theory and practice. They play a crucial role in modeling professional behavior and ensuring students' competency in patient care.
- **Healthcare Institutions** are our valued partners, providing the real-world settings in which students learn. These institutions work closely with MIE to ensure that the learning environments align with the goals of our academic programs and provide rich, diverse patient care experiences.
- **Patients** are integral to the clinical learning process, offering students the opportunity to develop their skills in communication, empathy, and clinical reasoning. At MIE, patient safety and well-being are prioritized in all clinical education activities.

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3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Malta ICOM Educational, the successful implementation and management of clinical education and work-based learning (WBL) relies on the collaboration of several key teams. Each team plays a critical role in ensuring that MIE's strategic vision for clinical education is carried out effectively, with a focus on student learning, patient care, and continuous quality improvement.

The Senior Management Team holds the responsibility for setting MIE's strategic vision for clinical education and work-based learning. They oversee the financial planning and resource allocation necessary to support clinical placements and the overall work-based learning framework. This team ensures that clinical education aligns with the broader institutional goals, fostering growth, sustainability, and compliance with national and international standards.

The Clinical Education Team, composed of the Head of Clinical Education and the Clinical Education Coordinators for each department (e.g., Osteopathy, Physiotherapy, Dental Hygiene), plays a vital role in shaping the operational aspects of clinical education. This team works in close collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty Office and the Quality Assurance Team to:

- Establish clear guidelines, procedures, and documentation to support clinical placements and ensure that all clinical activities meet the standards set by the institution and external accrediting bodies.
- Ensure that students receive adequate learning support during their clinical placements.
- Implement and oversee the assessment methods used in clinical education, ensuring that these methods accurately reflect the learning outcomes and competencies required for each program.
- Align the WBL components with academic curricula, ensuring that learning objectives are met, and addressing any emerging challenges in the program delivery.

4. Curriculum Framework

At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), the clinical education curriculum is designed to provide students with a structured, competency-based learning experience that prepares them for the realities of professional healthcare practice. MIE, in collaboration with tutors and students, is committed to fostering an educational environment that supports the development of clinical competence, professional responsibility, and patient-centred care.

4.1 Competency-Based Learning at MIE:

The clinical curriculum at MIE is structured around key competencies that healthcare professionals must master to provide safe, effective, and compassionate care. These competencies include clinical reasoning, patient communication, technical proficiency, and ethical practice. MIE ensures that these competencies are embedded into every stage of the learning process, from the classroom to the clinical setting.

- **MIE's Role:** MIE is responsible for ensuring that the curriculum aligns with both national and international standards of healthcare education. The institution regularly reviews and updates the curriculum to reflect the latest advancements in healthcare practice, while also ensuring compliance with MFHEA guidelines.

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- **Tutors' Role:** Clinical tutors play a pivotal role in guiding students through this competency-based curriculum. They are responsible for facilitating hands-on learning experiences, assessing student performance, and providing feedback that helps students develop critical thinking and practical skills. Tutors are expected to model professional behaviour, ensuring that students understand not only how to perform tasks but also why they are essential in patient care.
- **Students' Role:** Students are expected to actively engage with the curriculum, taking responsibility for their learning by practicing skills, seeking feedback, and reflecting on their experiences. MIE supports students by providing clear learning objectives and structured opportunities to practice and demonstrate their competencies in real-world settings.

4.2 Structure and Duration of Clinical Placements:

MIE's clinical placements are carefully structured to provide students with progressive learning opportunities that build upon their previous knowledge and skills. Each placement is tailored to ensure that students receive exposure to a range of clinical environments, patient populations, and healthcare challenges.

- **MIE's Role:** MIE is responsible for organizing and managing clinical placements in collaboration with partner healthcare institutions. The Clinical Education Team works to ensure that each placement meets the institution's high standards for safety, quality, and educational value. Placements are designed to align with the overall academic curriculum, providing students with experiences that complement their theoretical learning.
- **Tutors' Role:** Clinical tutors oversee students during their placements, ensuring that learning objectives are met and that students have the opportunity to develop their clinical skills in a supportive environment. Tutors are responsible for monitoring student progress, providing supervision during patient care, and facilitating reflective practice sessions.
- **Students' Role:** During clinical placements, students are expected to take a proactive approach to their learning, engaging with patients, participating in clinical decision-making, and adhering to professional standards. They are required to demonstrate their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, while also reflecting on their experiences to identify areas for improvement.

4.3 Integration of Simulation-Based Education:

In addition to real-world clinical placements, MIE incorporates simulation-based education into its curriculum. Simulation provides students with the opportunity to practice clinical scenarios in a controlled environment, allowing them to develop and refine their skills before engaging with real patients.

- **MIE's Role:** MIE is responsible for ensuring that simulation-based education is integrated into the curriculum at key stages, providing students with opportunities to practice and receive feedback in a risk-free environment.
- **Tutors' Role:** Tutors lead simulation sessions, guiding students through complex clinical scenarios and helping them develop their problem-solving and decision-making skills. They also provide feedback that helps students improve their performance in future simulations and real-world clinical encounters.

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- **Students' Role:** Students are expected to fully engage in simulation activities, treating them as critical opportunities to learn and practice. By participating in simulations, students can build their confidence and prepare for more challenging clinical placements.

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Curriculum:

MIE is committed to the continuous monitoring and evaluation of its clinical education curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. Regular feedback from students, tutors, and clinical partners is used to assess the curriculum's impact on student learning and patient outcomes.

- **MIE's Role:** The institution regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of students and complies with accrediting bodies' standards. This involves collecting data on student performance, clinical site evaluations, and patient care outcomes. MIE also works with the Quality Assurance Team to refine the curriculum based on this feedback, ensuring continuous improvement..
- **Tutors' Role:** Tutors are involved in the evaluation process by providing feedback on student performance and the effectiveness of the clinical placements. Their input is invaluable in shaping the future of the curriculum and identifying areas where additional support may be needed.
- **Students' Role:** Students play a critical role in the evaluation process by providing feedback on their learning experiences, including the quality of their clinical placements and the support they received from tutors. This feedback helps MIE refine the curriculum and improve future student experiences.

5. Standards for Clinical Placement Sites

Clinical placements are a vital component of the educational journey at Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), offering students the opportunity to transition from theoretical learning to real-world clinical practice. In collaboration with healthcare providers across multiple European countries, MIE ensures that clinical placements are carefully selected to provide enriching learning experiences, while upholding the highest standards of patient care and safety. These placements are governed by formal agreements, designed to ensure that both the patient's well-being and the student's learning are prioritized.

5.1 Agreements with Clinical Providers:

MIE establishes formal agreements with each clinical provider, ensuring that clinical placements operate within a structured framework that supports both student learning and patient safety. These agreements clearly define the terms of supervision, the roles of all parties involved, and the expectations for both patient care and educational outcomes.

Providers must meet the legal and ethical standards of their respective national healthcare systems, ensuring that clinical sites offer a safe and supportive environment for students to learn. The agreements ensure that students engage in meaningful clinical activities while being closely supervised, so they can safely develop their skills in patient care and clinical decision-making.

5.2 Focus on Patient Safety and Student Learning:

In every clinical placement, patient safety is the top priority. Strict safety protocols are implemented to ensure that students can practice their skills without compromising patient care. However, alongside this focus on safety, these clinical environments are also carefully designed to maximize student learning.

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Clinical placements provide students with hands-on experiences where they can apply theoretical knowledge in real patient scenarios. This experiential learning is critical for developing clinical reasoning, communication skills, and professional judgment. By working directly with patients, students have the opportunity to:

- **Apply Clinical Knowledge:** Students move from the classroom to the clinic, applying their knowledge in diagnosing, treating, and managing patient conditions.
- **Develop Critical Thinking:** Working in real-world settings encourages students to think on their feet, analyse patient data, and make informed clinical decisions.
- **Refine Technical Skills:** Under the supervision of experienced clinicians, students practice essential technical skills and gain confidence in their abilities.
- **Enhance Communication:** Engaging with patients directly allows students to improve their communication skills, which are vital for both patient interaction and collaboration with healthcare teams.

These placements are not just about practicing procedures; they are immersive learning environments where students can reflect on their experiences, receive feedback from supervisors, and continually refine their skills. The structured nature of the placements ensures that students are progressively challenged to take on more responsibility as their competencies grow.

5.3 Ethical and Legal Considerations in Patient Care and Student Learning:

Ethical practice is at the core of all clinical activities, ensuring that students learn in an environment that upholds the rights and dignity of patients. Every clinical provider is required to adhere to national healthcare laws and ethical guidelines, such as obtaining informed consent, maintaining patient confidentiality, and delivering care with respect for patient autonomy.

Students are educated on the importance of ethical decision-making, and they are expected to demonstrate these principles in their clinical practice. By engaging in ethically sound patient care, students not only protect their patients but also learn the foundations of professional integrity that will guide them throughout their careers.

6. Supervision and Mentoring

Effective supervision and mentoring are the cornerstones of clinical education at Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), ensuring that students not only acquire the necessary clinical skills but also develop the professional competencies required for their future healthcare careers.

At MIE, clinical placements are carefully structured to build progressively on the knowledge and skills gained in previous semesters. Each semester has defined Learning Outcomes (LOs) that are directly linked to the program's overall educational goals, ensuring that students develop both foundational and advanced competencies as they progress through their training. The clinical placement LOs are integrated with the overall program's study Los, ensuring a cohesive learning experience that progressively leads students toward professional readiness.

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6.1 Supervision Structure:

The supervision of students during clinical placements is structured to provide ongoing support, feedback, and evaluation. Supervisors play a pivotal role in guiding students through the complexities of patient care while ensuring that the students are on track to meet the learning outcomes for each semester.

Clinical supervisors, minimum of 5-years' experience in clinical education, are responsible for providing day-to-day oversight of students' work in the clinical setting. Their role is to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with patients, apply their academic knowledge, and receive constructive feedback on their performance.

At MIE, Clinical Supervisor are mentors who provides more personalized support throughout their clinical education journey. As mentors, they work closely with students to help them reflect on their learning experiences, set professional goals, and develop strategies for meeting the LOs of each semester

6.2 Feedback and Reflection:

Feedback is a central component of the supervision and mentoring process at MIE. Students receive both formal and informal feedback throughout their placements, ensuring they understand their strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the semester's LOs.

- **Continuous Feedback:** Supervisors and tutors provide continuous feedback during clinical sessions, offering immediate insights into students' performance. This feedback is focused on helping students meet the specific LOs for that semester.
- **Formal Evaluations:** At key points during each placement, students undergo formal evaluations where their progress is assessed against the semester's defined LOs.
- **Reflective Practice:** MIE encourages students to engage in reflective practice, where they critically evaluate their own performance, identify areas for improvement, and develop plans to achieve their learning goals.

7. Student Assessment and Evaluation

At the heart of MIE's clinical education framework is a structured clinical assessment process designed to evaluate students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world patient care settings. While these assessments are primarily formative, providing ongoing feedback to help students improve their skills throughout their learning journey, they are reinforced by regular summative assessments that measure overall competence and readiness.

7.1 Consistency and Fairness of Marking Criteria:

MIE places a strong emphasis on the **consistency and fairness** of clinical assessments. All clinical assessments are guided by standardized marking criteria, ensuring that students are evaluated on clear, measurable learning outcomes. These criteria focus on core competencies such as clinical reasoning, communication, patient management, and professional behaviour.

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7.2 Formative Assessment in Clinical Settings:

In clinical settings, formative assessments are ongoing, with supervisors providing real-time feedback on students' performance during patient interactions. This feedback is crucial in helping students identify areas for improvement, refine their clinical skills, and develop confidence in managing patients. These formative assessments ensure that students are actively supported as they work toward meeting the learning outcomes for each semester.

7.3 Portfolios and Professional Standards

In addition to clinical assessments, MIE uses portfolios as a key tool for evaluating students' overall progress and commitment to professional standards. Portfolios allow students to document their clinical experiences, reflect on their learning, and demonstrate their development over time.

Portfolios are aligned with professional standards, ensuring that students are not only meeting the academic and clinical requirements of their program but also developing the attributes expected of healthcare professionals.

A key component of the portfolio is reflective practice. Students are encouraged to critically reflect on their clinical experiences, analyse their decision-making processes, and identify areas where they can improve.

7.4 Student Support and Remediation

MIE is committed to providing robust support systems for students, particularly for those who may struggle to meet the required competencies during their clinical placements. The institution recognizes that students may progress at different rates, and tailored support is available to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Throughout their clinical education, students have access to a variety of support resources, including regular meetings with mentors and supervisors, feedback sessions, and access to educational materials that can help address areas of weakness. These support systems are designed to guide students through their clinical placements while providing them with the tools they need to achieve their learning goals.

For students who require further assistance, MIE offers remediation pathways that are tailored to the individual's needs. The goal of remediation is to provide students with the support they need to meet the program's academic and clinical standards without compromising patient safety or the quality of care provided.

8. Ethical and Legal Considerations

In clinical education, the ethical and legal dimensions of patient care are fundamental to both the student learning experience and the healthcare profession itself. At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), students are not only taught the technical and clinical skills required for their professions but are also deeply immersed in the ethical and legal responsibilities that come with patient care. These principles are woven into every aspect of clinical training, ensuring that students graduate with a strong commitment to upholding the highest standards of professional integrity.

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8.1 Patient Safety and Consent:

Throughout their clinical placements, students are trained to prioritize the safety and well-being of the patients under their care. This includes understanding the importance of following safety protocols, accurately assessing patient needs, and ensuring that all treatments are evidence-based and appropriate for the clinical context. Students are also educated on the need to obtain informed consent from patients before any procedures or treatments are administered.

8.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection:

Another critical ethical responsibility that MIE emphasizes is the protection of patient confidentiality. Students are taught to handle patient information with the utmost care, adhering to both national and international regulations regarding data protection. Whether in conversation, documentation, or digital records, students are expected to maintain the privacy of patient data at all times.

8.3 Professional Conduct and Accountability:

In addition to legal regulations, students are trained to adhere to the ethical codes of conduct that govern their professions. This includes maintaining professionalism in all interactions, being honest and transparent in clinical situations, and taking responsibility for their actions.

8.4 Health and Safety in Clinical Environments:

MIE also places a strong emphasis on health and safety within clinical environments. Students are educated on infection control, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the importance of adhering to local and institutional health policies.

9. Inclusivity and Accessibility

At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), we are committed to creating a learning environment that is both inclusive and accessible, reflecting the diverse needs of our students and the populations they will one day serve.

9.1 Diversity and Cultural Competence:

Healthcare professionals increasingly work in diverse settings, interacting with patients from various cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and to understand how these may influence patient care. This training enables them to adapt their communication and clinical approaches to meet the needs of a diverse patient population, promoting equitable healthcare outcomes for all.

9.2 Inclusive Learning Environment:

MIE fosters an inclusive learning environment by ensuring that clinical placements and classroom settings are welcoming to students from all backgrounds. This includes promoting a culture of respect and support among students, tutors, and clinical supervisors. MIE also addresses issues of implicit bias, providing training to both students and faculty on how to recognize and mitigate biases that may affect interactions with patients or peers.

9.3 Support for Diverse Learning Needs:

MIE recognizes that students may have diverse learning needs. This includes providing tailored educational support for students who may face challenges such as language barriers, learning differences, or personal

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circumstances that affect their studies. MIE offers a range of resources to ensure that all students can thrive in their clinical education.

9.4 Fostering an Accessible Healthcare Workforce:

MIE's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility is about more than just supporting students—it is about preparing them to become healthcare professionals who are capable of providing inclusive care to all patients. By instilling values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its students, MIE helps to build a healthcare workforce that is empathetic, culturally aware, and equipped to meet the needs of all members of society.

10. Evaluation and Quality Assurance

At Malta ICOM Educational (MIE), the process of evaluating and ensuring the quality of clinical education is central to maintaining high standards of learning and patient care. MIE's approach to quality assurance is comprehensive and continuous, involving a range of processes that include structured induction programs, regular meetings and feedback sessions, performance monitoring, and stakeholder engagement through surveys and questionnaires. This multi-faceted approach ensures that both students and staff are supported, and that clinical education meets the evolving needs of healthcare practice.

10.1 Induction Process for Students and Staff:

A key component of MIE's quality assurance framework is the induction process for both students and staff, which lays the foundation for a successful clinical education experience.

The student induction process is comprehensive, covering everything from clinical placement protocols to patient care ethics. During the induction, students are introduced to the learning outcomes they are expected to achieve, the assessment methods that will be used, and the standards of professional conduct they must uphold.

For clinical supervisors and staff, the induction process focuses on aligning their roles with the educational objectives of MIE's programs. Supervisors are briefed on the assessment criteria, their role in providing formative feedback, and the importance of consistency in evaluating student performance.

10.2 Meetings and Feedback Mechanisms:

To ensure continuous improvement and address any emerging challenges, MIE fosters an open and collaborative environment through regular meetings and feedback sessions.

- **Student-Supervisor Meetings:** Throughout the clinical placements, students meet regularly with their clinical supervisors to discuss their progress, identify issues and propose improvements
- **Program Review Meetings:** MIE also conducts regular meetings with clinical supervisors. These meetings focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum, the quality of clinical placements, and any feedback received from students and patients.

10.3 Monitoring Student Performance:

Student performance is continuously monitored throughout their clinical placements to ensure they are progressing as expected toward achieving the learning outcomes. MIE uses both formative and summative

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assessment tools to gauge student performance, with an emphasis on fairness, consistency, and transparency in marking.

- **Formative Assessments:** Supervisors and tutors provide real-time feedback during clinical placements, which is essential for guiding students in improving their skills and meeting the required competencies. This process allows students to adjust their approach to patient care, refine their clinical techniques, and enhance their critical thinking abilities.
- **Summative Assessments:** At the conclusion of each clinical placement, students undergo summative evaluations to determine whether they have met the learning outcomes for that stage of the program. These evaluations are based on clear, standardized criteria, ensuring that all students are assessed fairly and consistently.

10.4 Stakeholder Engagement through Survey Questionnaires:

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, MIE regularly gathers feedback from key stakeholders—including students, supervisors, and patients—through the use of survey questionnaires. These surveys are designed to capture a broad range of perspectives on the clinical education experience, providing valuable insights that inform program development and quality assurance.

10.5 Using Feedback for Continuous Improvement:

The data collected from is analysed by the Clinical Education Team and Quality Assurance Team, which uses the insights to make informed decisions about program enhancements. Whether it is adjusting the curriculum to better meet the needs of students or refining the supervision process to improve student support, the feedback gathered through these mechanisms plays a critical role in shaping the future of MIE's clinical education program.

10.6 Monitoring and Evaluation of Clinical Sites and Student Learning:

To ensure the highest standards of patient care and student education, MIE conducts ongoing monitoring and evaluation of clinical sites. This involves site visits and systematic audits conducted by the Clinical Education Committee, the panel includes 2 internal representatives and 1 external stakeholder.

These evaluations focus on:

- **Patient Safety:** Ensuring that all clinical environments adhere to strict safety protocols, protecting both patients and students.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Assessing whether the clinical sites are providing the intended learning experiences, helping students meet their educational goals.
- **Supervision and Support:** Monitoring the quality of supervision provided to students, ensuring that they receive the guidance and feedback necessary for their growth.
- **Resource availability:** Evaluating whether clinical sites have adequate resources, including medical equipment, technology, and learning materials, to facilitate effective learning and patient care.

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- **Student engagement and integration:** Ensuring that students are meaningfully integrated into the clinical teams, providing them with opportunities to participate actively in patient care while balancing their educational needs.
- **Cultural competence and inclusivity:** Assessing whether clinical environments promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring students experience a supportive setting that values cultural competence and respect for diverse patient populations.
- **Professionalism and interprofessional collaboration:** Observing the professional behaviour of students and staff, ensuring that students learn to collaborate effectively with a range of healthcare professionals in a multidisciplinary team.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Ensuring that formal and informal channels for student feedback are available and functional, enabling students to voice concerns or suggestions regarding their clinical experiences.
- **Well-being and mental health support:** Monitoring the availability of mental health resources and support services to safeguard students' well-being during their clinical placements.

11. Quality Assurance for External Internships

While all clinical placements at MIE are subject to rigorous quality assurance (QA) processes, external internships present unique considerations due to the involvement of partner institutions outside of MIE's direct control. As such, MIE has established a targeted approach to ensure that the educational quality, student support, and patient safety in external placements are consistent with internal standards.

11.1 External Site Selection and Approval

Before any external site is approved for student internships, MIE conducts a thorough evaluation to ensure it meets both the educational and safety standards required for clinical training. Key aspects of this process include:

- **Initial Audit:** A comprehensive audit is conducted to assess the site's resources, staff qualifications, patient safety protocols, and ability to provide appropriate learning experiences aligned with MIE's curriculum.
- **Formal Agreements:** MIE enters into formal agreements with external sites, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, including the expectations for student supervision, feedback mechanisms, supervisor experience, resources available, support provided for students, and compliance with both legal and ethical standards.
- **Stakeholder Input:** MIE ensures that external site evaluations are based on input from both internal stakeholders (clinical educators and programme leads) and external stakeholders (site supervisors and administrative staff) to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting educational goals.

11.2 Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of External Sites

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Once an external internship site is approved, MIE implements continuous monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with QA standards. This differs from internal placements in several ways:

- **Regular Site Visits:** MIE representatives, including members of the Clinical Education Committee, conduct site visits to evaluate the quality of the learning environment. These visits focus on the adequacy of student support, adherence to safety protocols, and the alignment of clinical opportunities with learning outcomes.
- **External Stakeholder Reporting:** External site supervisors provide regular reports to MIE, detailing student attendance and overall performance during the placement. This includes general observations on the student's engagement and professionalism, rather than formal summative assessments.
- **Student Feedback:** MIE places a strong emphasis on gathering feedback from students upon completion of their external placements. This feedback is critical for identifying areas of improvement in the external site and assessing whether it provides a comparable learning experience to internal placements.

11.3 Specific QA Challenges for External Sites

External placements often operate within different healthcare systems and cultural contexts, which necessitates additional QA measures:

- **Local Healthcare Regulations:** MIE ensures that external sites adhere to the healthcare regulations of their respective countries. External placements must comply with both local laws and MIE's ethical and safety standards, ensuring consistency in patient care and student learning across diverse settings.
- **Cultural and Systemic Differences:** MIE recognizes that healthcare practices, patient demographics, and supervisory structures may vary across external sites. Therefore, MIE works closely with external partners to bridge any gaps between MIE's academic expectations and the realities of the external clinical environment.

11.4 Supervision, Mentoring, and Formative Assessment in External Placements

During external internships, students interact with their designated supervisor or mentor, who provides guidance and real-time feedback. However, summative assessments of student performance are not carried out by external site supervisors. Instead, external supervisors focus on supporting the student's development by offering formative feedback throughout the placement.

- **External Supervisor Reporting:** Supervisors provide reports on student attendance, professionalism, and engagement, offering general feedback rather than formal summative assessments.
- **Formative Assessment by MIE Staff:** MIE staff are responsible for conducting formative assessments of students placed at external sites. These assessments are carried out in alignment with MIE's educational framework, ensuring that students receive constructive feedback focused on their progress toward learning outcomes.

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- **Remote Support from MIE:** In addition to on-site supervision, students in external internships have access to MIE's remote support systems, including online mentoring, regular check-ins with MIE staff, and access to educational resources.

11.5 Assessment Consistency

MIE ensures that formative assessments conducted during external internships follow the same criteria as internal placements. This consistency is achieved through:

- **Standardized Assessment Forms:** All assessments are based on standardized forms used across both internal and external placements, ensuring uniform evaluation criteria.
- **Coordination Between MIE Faculty and External Supervisors:** Regular coordination between MIE faculty and external supervisors ensures that students receive aligned feedback and support, even when summative assessments are not conducted by the external site.

11.6 Induction for External Internships

A comprehensive induction process is critical to ensuring that students are well-prepared for their external placements. Inductions are conducted both at MIE and at the host institution to help students understand their roles, expectations, and the support available during their internship.

11.6.1 MIE Induction: Before starting their external placement, students undergo an induction at MIE where they are briefed on what to expect during their internship. This includes:

- **Placement Objectives:** A detailed overview of the learning outcomes they are expected to achieve during the placement.
- **Student Responsibilities:** Clear guidance on professional behaviour, communication, and the role of self-reflection in their learning.
- **Support Structures:** Information on how MIE will continue to support students during their placement, including remote mentoring and access to learning resources.
- **Formative Assessment Overview:** Explanation of how formative assessments will be conducted by MIE staff and the importance of feedback in their development.

11.6.2 Host Institution Induction: Upon arrival at the external site, students receive a local induction from the host institution. This induction is designed to familiarize them with the clinical environment and the specific expectations at the placement site, covering:

- **Institutional Overview:** A briefing on the institution's mission, values, and operational structure.
- **Key Personnel:** Introduction to the staff members they will interact with, including their designated supervisors and mentors, as well as other relevant personnel.
- **Safety and Operational Protocols:** An overview of the host institution's safety procedures, patient care protocols, and any specific rules the student must follow.
- **Day-to-Day Expectations:** Clear guidelines on the daily routines, shift expectations, and the types of clinical experiences the student will be involved in.

11.7 Remediation and Intervention

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In cases where an external site does not meet MIE's QA standards during a placement:

- **Intervention Measures:** If issues arise during an external internship that compromise the quality of the learning experience or patient safety, MIE will implement intervention measures. This may include additional site visits, increased communication with the external supervisor, or, in extreme cases, suspension of the placement.
- **Student Support:** MIE ensures that any student placed in a site that is found lacking receives appropriate remediation, including the possibility of reassignment to another site or additional support to achieve their learning outcomes.

11.8 Continuous Improvement and Partnership Building

MIE is committed to maintaining long-term partnerships with external sites, fostering continuous improvement:

- **Annual Reviews:** All external sites are subject to an annual review process where their performance is evaluated based on student feedback, supervisor reports, and MIE's monitoring activities. This ensures ongoing compliance with MIE's standards.
- **Collaborative QA Improvements:** MIE collaborates with external partners to identify areas for improvement, working together to enhance both the educational experience and patient care at external sites.