

MILLENNIAL STUDENTS IN FIELDWORK: GUIDELINES TO SUCCESS (SUMMARY)

Key characteristics of millennial students (those born between 1981 and 2000) are summarised below, with strategies for both students and clinical educators to consider. These descriptions are acknowledged to be generalisations that will not apply to every person within this generation. Please use this information as a starting point for a shared dialogue between students and clinical educators to better understand and work with each other.

Clinical educators may need to adapt their style to maximise the opportunity for their students to succeed and contribute to the placement site. This may contrast with how clinical educators were supervised themselves, and/or how they have supervised in the past. At the same time, students may need to adapt to the differing approaches of their clinical educators, acknowledging any generational differences and the constraints of the placement context.

| CHARACTERISTIC | FOR CLINICAL EDUCATORS TO CONSIDER | FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER |
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| Clear expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set and communicate clear expectations at the start of the placement, and encourage regular discussion about these Avoid making assumptions about what expectations students should already be aware of Provide clear and thorough orientation to placement, using placement agreements and learning contracts where possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always communicate with your clinical educator if you are unsure of what is expected of you Avoid making assumptions Show initiative to demonstrate your independence and maturity |
| Digital natives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that students are synthesising large quantities of available information and this may influence their reasoning depth and speed Set clear boundaries for use of devices on placement and ensure other staff model this Acknowledge that technology is inherent in students' day to day life and they use it as a tool to access knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and follow the expectations set for you for using devices on placement and ask if you're unsure Acknowledge that regular access to information and technology is not always practical or professional in some contexts Be patient with your email communication, respecting that your clinical educator has other priorities and may not access or respond to emails as often or quickly as you might |
| Work/life balance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure clear and mutual understanding of deadlines with no hidden assumptions Model work/life balance wherever possible as an important strategy for retaining the future workforce Acknowledge and be sensitive to the rising rate of mental health issues in students at university | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure you have understood and noted all deadlines and communicate regularly about how you feel you are managing your workload Negotiate extensions well in advance Demonstrate a work/life balance but consider how this may be perceived if you do not meet deadlines |
| Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback is best if it is understandable, selective, specific, timely and regular, contextualised, non-judgemental, balanced, solution-focussed, transferable and personalised (Molloy & Boud, 2013; Hills et al., 2016) Feedback should be a dialogue, and a safe space for discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the time constraints of your clinical educator and that you may not receive as much feedback as you would like Communicate specific priority areas that you would like feedback on Demonstrate self-reflection and insight, and take ownership of your learning |
| Value the relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in building the student-clinical educator relationship with a focus on collaboration and mutual respect Try not to misinterpret a more casual approach as disrespect but do ensure that boundaries and professional expectations are clear Encourage critical thinking and questioning but expect this to be carried out appropriately and professionally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge and respect organisational hierarchies that may exist Be clear on and stick to professional / personal boundaries Communicate any issues affecting your performance with your clinical educator or university contact Always consider how your behaviour may be perceived by others, regardless of whether this is your intention |