

FACT SHEET – Student Clinical Placements COVID-19 Guidance

Updated 12/01/2022

OFFICIAL

Purpose

Due to the changing COVID-19 environment, this fact sheet provides specific information to all stakeholders involved in student clinical placements. The information is in line with current SA Government Emergency Management Directives. This guidance applies to all students who undertake clinical placements in healthcare setting.

For the most up to date advice regarding COVID-19, please visit the SA Government website at [covid-19.sa.gov.au](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au).

General recommendations on student clinical placements

Students are recognised as part of the healthcare workforce and in most clinical environments are permitted to continue clinical placements during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with appropriate safeguards in place. This may vary between Local Health Networks (LHNs). Each LHN describes their response using the term CoSTAT (COVID STATUS) matrix which informs their decisions. Please contact your local site representative for site specific information.

The value and significant contribution that students bring to the health workforce during this unprecedented time must be acknowledged. However, it is recognised that some students may be concerned about doing placements in this current environment and appropriate support should be made available.

To ensure there is not a detrimental flow-on effect on students being able to enter our healthcare workforce, preference should be given to those clinical placements that are critical for students to progress in their training and achieve on-time graduation.

Vaccination

The SA Government requires healthcare workers to be fully vaccinated as a requirement to work. Students on clinical placements will continue to be part of the core definition of healthcare workers. The requirement for mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations will now include a booster of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine, this comes into effect on 29 January 2022. All workers must have had, or have evidence of a booking to have, a booster within four weeks of becoming eligible. People aged 18 years and over are eligible to receive the booster dose four months after receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

All students on clinical placements will need to provide evidence of their vaccination status / booking for booster vaccination to enter a public health service setting, including residential aged care facilities, home and community care, and commence clinical placements.

Education providers (EPs) need to ensure all pre-placement requirements including vaccination have been met prior to students attending sites. A vaccination status data field is available in Placeright™ for each individual student profile in the 'Student checks' fields. This is to provide a central point for this information, which is accessible to both education providers and health sites.

From 6 January 2022 the [Emergency Management \(Healthcare Setting Workers Vaccination No 5\) \(COVID-19\) Direction 2022](#) has been signed to come into effect at the end of January 2022. This Direction has been updated to require people working in healthcare settings to have a booster of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine. This includes health professional students working in SA Health facilities.

All Students must have had, or have evidence of a booking to have, a booster dose within four weeks of becoming eligible. People aged 18 years and over are eligible to receive the booster dose four months after receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

This requirement will come into effect on 29 January 2022.

Student clinical placements within health services

All student clinical placements need to adhere to LHNs COVID-19 policies and procedures.

The following safeguards apply, and students must meet the following requirements prior to placement:

EPs need to ensure that Students:

- Are fully vaccinated against COVID-19
- Have been fit-tested for N95 prior to the commencement of their placement. Detmold is the SA Health preference due to supply. If Detmold mask not suitable, student/ EP needs to contact LHN to discuss alternative options.
- Have completed pre-placement training in correct donning/doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Comply with COVID-19 testing requirements i.e. Rapid Antigen Tests
- Comply with QR check-in at sites
- Declare any recent travel
- Declare any close contact exposure as soon as known and adhere to quarantine and testing requirements
- Know who to report to if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19

Students must not attend clinical placement if they feel unwell and should follow SA Government and health service advice regarding testing and quarantine requirements.

Students should be encouraged to be vigilant for symptoms and to report even the mildest symptoms to their supervisor. They will need to isolate while awaiting test results. Students will not be permitted to continue their clinical placements during this period.

Reducing risk during a placement

The following advice may help to further reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 on student clinical placements:

- Ensure physical distancing, hand hygiene, and frequent cleaning and disinfection are supported in non-clinical as well as clinical areas where staff or students may congregate (e.g. lunch areas).
- Some sites may require students to undertake Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) on a daily basis; please check with the site; the RAT kit will be provided by the health site.
- Ensure students are cohorted to limit the number of students who come into contact with a given patient.
- Ensure the number of students and staff in a patient's room complies with physical distancing recommendations and is kept to the minimum to achieve proper care of the patient.
- Limit the number of people at handover and on ward rounds to the minimum number required.
- Students should not attend placement if unwell.
- Students who do not meet vaccination requirements or have not been fit-tested will not be able to attend placements.
- Use video-conferencing or other virtual means for meetings, assessments, performance reviews, where practicable.

Student employment in settings external to their clinical placement

Some students may undertake part-time employment during their studies. If a student is employed within health service or facility which is experiencing an active outbreak and/or another workplace listed as a community exposure site, the student may be advised to get tested, quarantine and seek further advice from the Department of Health. Students will not be permitted to undertake clinical placements during this period of quarantine.

Recommended Links

SA Health COVID website

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/covid-19>

SA Health COVID vaccine

<https://www.covidvaccine.sa.gov.au/>

Emergency Management Directive

<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/emergency-declarations/healthcare-setting-workers-vaccination>

International travel

<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/travel/international-travel>

Acknowledgements

Victorian Government, Department of Health (with permission)

Student clinical placements COVID-19 guidance – updated 6 December 2021

For more information

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