

# **Guidelines for Pre-Registration Health Discipline Student Placements at All DHBs**

COVID-19

## Pre-Registration Health Discipline Student Placements at All DHBs

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of the health workforce, including students, to maintaining the wellbeing of individuals and communities and is highly valued by district health boards and the public. The supply of students, through education, contributes to the sustainability of the health workforce. This Guideline supports students to continue their placements, successfully complete their education, and enter the health workforce, without delay. The ability to shift focus according to need and keep equity a central feature of the COVID-19 response, requires a prepared and ready workforce.

This Guideline is a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and acknowledges that achieving Māori health equity requires collective effort across the health and disability system and the application of Te Tiriti articles and principles at every level of the response. Māori are a priority population group for the COVID-19 response. Māori experience higher rates of infectious diseases compared to other New Zealanders. The unequal distribution and exposure to the determinants of health further increases the risk for Māori.

Nothing in this Guideline takes priority over the Ministry of Health, Updated COVID-19 Māori Health Response Plan (MoH, 2020). The Plan is a collective and integrated approach across the COVID-19 response with which all strategies and guidelines should align. The Plan provides a framework to protect, prevent, and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 within whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities. The Plan contributes to the broader health and disability COVID-19 response and is supported by Whakamaua: the Māori Health Action Plan 2020–2025. Whakamaua gives practical effect to [He Korowai Oranga: the Māori Health Strategy](#) and its overarching vision of Pae Ora – healthy futures for Māori. [www.health.govt.nz/MHAP](http://www.health.govt.nz/MHAP)

### Student placements

As we live with COVID-19, it is important that we are consistent in messages about student placements to guide understanding, and action, which will reflect differing practice placement models for students and supervisors.

This Guideline was developed in April 2020 in partnership between DHBs and Education providers responsible for student clinical placements. The Guideline was updated in September 2020 to cover the changes in the Ministry policy<sup>1</sup> regarding essential workers and to ensure it covers regional variation in Alert levels. It has been reviewed in August 2021 and October 2021 and amendments made to cover the Ministry's change to the policy on student placements, the risks posed by SARS-CoV-2 variants, progress of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme and mandates and sustaining the pipeline as we transition to COVID as prevalent in our community. Progress on the Guideline is the result of collaboration and a unified effort; consultation across DHBs and TEPs is ongoing.

### Scope

- The scope of this guideline is DHB health care providers. Private employers such as General Practice, Pharmacy, Aged Residential Care, NGOs, Lead Maternity Carers and primary care where the placement provider is a private employer are not included. These sectors/employers may wish to adopt this guideline, and/or education providers may wish to insist that private providers adopt the principles prior to placing students.
- All Health Pre-Registration Health Discipline Students are covered unless they are employed eg: Anaesthetic Technicians

<sup>1</sup> Note: The Ministry's policy and other related guidance can be found on the TAS website at <https://tas.health.nz/employment-and-capability-building/employment-relations/dhb-covid-19-workforce-fags-and-resources/>

- A student is enrolled in a health discipline programme and includes anyone who hasn't yet completed all required training to achieve full qualification (and that the term student is used consistently to avoid mis-interpretation across professions)

### Key principles for clinical placements

We recognise COVID-19 is a fluid situation and we acknowledge that things may change rapidly. The Ministry's Policy on Student Placements and these Guidelines have been written to prioritise students' safety, to ensure a consistent and cohesive approach to managing training placements, and to minimise disruptions to the workforce pipeline.

In partnership, education providers and health service placement providers commit to:

- Keep student safety as the first priority, including provisions for assessing vulnerability of students to align with the guidance for workers and be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Recognise that student year groups will have differing levels of knowledge and first year students are particularly vulnerable.
- Meet regionally where possible prior to decisions to remove students from placement, initiated by either a DHB or education provider to consider a regionally coordinated and consistent approach.
- Keep student placements in place as long as possible, initially prioritising transition<sup>2</sup> or final placement pre- registration fully COVID-19 vaccinated<sup>3</sup> students from all health science disciplines and then all fully COVID-19 vaccinated final year students for whom the impact of COVID-19 is likely to be greatest to maintain the health workforce pipeline.
- Work regionally to revise student placements and the way they are done, where it makes sense, to ensure consistency regarding placement return or cessation decisions and messaging to students.
- Plan and manage student placements which reflect the various New Zealand COVID -19 government policy settings e.g. traffic light settings and the 'hospital status levels', this includes availability of suitable supervisors for a placement at any given site.
- Consider the vulnerabilities of Māori communities and other populations with low rates of COVID-19 vaccinations where student placements can be supported.
- Consider the vulnerabilities of specific populations including mental health, primary care, community, aged residential care to determine suitability of placements in these areas.
- Work to enable the opportunity for some flexibility around clinical assessments.
- Connect with regulatory authorities to understand implications as government policy settings change.
- Work with students to understand their personal vulnerabilities and support appropriate placements.
- Collaborate to support and supervise students in the field/placement.
- Ensure that both the education provider and health setting are informed if any issue that arise with a student.
- Actively promote influenza and COVID-19 vaccination and immunity as the best means of protection for patients and workers.
- Ensure students do not access DHB facilities without pre-placement health assessment and declaration screening carried out by the education provider and vaccination/infection screening status advised to the DHB.
- Ensure students and Clinical Tutors who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or have not passed a Mask Seal/Fit Check or Fit Test (to WorkSafe NZ requirements) within 12 months, will not have access to DHB clinical placements/settings or be able to perform (or be involved with) Aerosol Generating Procedures or

<sup>2</sup> Final year final semester students

<sup>3</sup> Fully vaccinated means two COVID-19 vaccinations and booster as per the [Vaccination mandates](#).

swabbing teams.

#### **DHB responsibilities**

- Inform the Tertiary partners of commonly available N95 mask models
- Re-fit test when a student is fit tested and their mask type is not available
- Work with Tertiary partners to support them to obtain masks for fit testing where problems arise

#### **Tertiary provider's responsibilities**

##### Ensure students:

- Are pre-placement screened and vaccination/infection screening status advised to the DHB (see Health Self-Assessment, declaration and Privacy Notice in Appendix 3) prior to their return to clinical placement including their health/mental health wellbeing
- Take responsibility for safe IPC practice application of PPE and N95s
- Are Mask Fit Tested by a certified mask fit tester (WorkSafe NZ requirements) and then annually
- Who have not undertaken Fit Testing prior to their first placement commencing in 2022 practice User Seal Check. Education providers will provide theoretical guidance and competency to be assessed once in the clinical environment
- Provide a copy of the Mask Fit Test outcome to the relevant DHB Placement Team prior to their placements
- Do not attend clinical placements if they are unwell or in the same household as a person in quarantine or with probable<sup>4</sup> or confirmed COVID-19
- Speak to their supervisor immediately if they become unwell or unable to attend their placement because a member of their household is unwell during clinical placement
- Understand that the provision of healthcare is not without risk. Risks relating to COVID-19 are mitigated by physical distancing, vaccination, and Infection Prevention Strategies such as donning and doffing practice and PPE. If a student perceives they have a condition which makes them more vulnerable, they should seek specialist review and liaise with their Programme Director.
- Speak to their clinical tutor if they are also employed in a setting which gives them access to vulnerable people e.g. Aged Residential Care.
- Inform their programme if they are involved in essential work outside of their programme of study
- Inform their employer when they are recommencing their placement e.g. Aged Residential Care.

##### Student supervision and support by clinical tutors:

- Provide students with placement provider occupational health information relating to travel and self-isolation advice
- Provide training in the principles of IPC and preventative education
- Work with practice placement providers to ensure MOH infection control guidelines are maintained at all times and students adhere to the placement provider infection prevention and control and COVID-19 policies, procedures and practices e.g. hand hygiene, safe use of personal protective equipment mask use and physical distancing.
- Promote and support student's physical and psychological wellbeing
- Support the clinical placement provider by being present on site and available in clinical practice

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<sup>4</sup> Confirmed (SARS-CoV-2 test positive during current illness; Probable, tested negative, but ID decision to treat as COVID

### **Good Practice for Maintaining Safety of Household**

Students must use physical distancing (appropriate to NZ COVID-19 Protection Framework when out of the home environment, when in the community or on the way to or from hospitals or community-based placements. They must follow safety guidance at the clinical placement site, maintain hand hygiene and cough etiquette and provide directions to students in accordance with guidance found at:

<https://tas.health.nz/assets/ER/DHB-COVID-19-Workforce-resources/Protection-Framework-Traffic-Light-Employee-Related-FAQs-Dec-2021-v2.pdf>  
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/protecting-yourself-and-others-covid-19>

### **Employment in other areas of the Health and Disability Sector**

- Students should also advise their tertiary institute programme director if they wish to undertake health care assistant roles, or other clinical support roles e.g. orderlies or cleaners, where they cannot carry on in their training placement.

### **Understanding the matrix for all health discipline pre-registration student placement (Appendix 1)**

- This matrix is designed to guide thinking and decisions in relation to appropriate placement of pre-registration students at different levels of the NZ COVID-19 Protection Framework and the Hospital and Community response frameworks.
- As the situation changes, the appropriateness of placements may need to be adjusted mid-placement. This may be as a result of deployment of staff and impact on ability to provide adequate supervision.
- If there are different regional response levels students may not be able to be placed outside their own region as travel may be restricted. The region of origin of the student may determine the placement within DHB-Education provider placement contract arrangements.
- Local arrangements to involve all stakeholders to expedite consistent decision making and communication should be established across all education providers and health care providers.
- At all stages and phases, initiate preparation for student placement adjustments. Interrupted placements may not be able to resumed at the same DHB or with the same supervisor.
- Supervision capacity may be impacted by staff availability, anxiety or welfare matters
- The inability to meet or maintain standard COVID control procedures such as physical distancing requirements despite PPE measures including mask use, may impact on students' ability to continue or return to placement
- Some students may not be able to return to clinical placement due to vulnerabilities and or location.

## Appendix 1: Matrix for all health discipline pre-registration student placements

| NZ COVID-19 Protection Framework <sup>5</sup>  | COVID-19 National Hospital Response & Community Framework  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>CPF Green – Ready to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 across New Zealand, including sporadic imported cases.</li> <li>• Limited community transmission. COVID-19 hospitalisations are at a manageable level.</li> <li>• Whole of health system is ready to respond – primary care, public health, and hospitals.</li> </ul> | <p>Student placements continue however students should only provide care to COVID-19 positive patients for patient safety or training reasons as long as supervision is adequate..</p> <p>Pre-screen risks pre-community visits and ensure student does not enter house if concerns.</p> |
| <p><b>CPF Orange – Increasing risk to at risk populations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing community transmission with increasing pressure on health system.</li> <li>• Whole of health system is focusing resources but can manage – primary care, public health, and hospitals.</li> </ul>  | <p>Use PPE including mask use to support physical distancing capability</p>  |
| <p><b>CPF RED – Protect at risk populations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action needed to protect health system – system facing unsustainable number of hospitalisations.</li> <li>• Action needed to protect at-risk populations.</li> </ul>  |  |

| Appendix 2: Considerations to be given to individual student and the DHB/Hospital/Clinical Area: <b>Individual</b>   | DHB/Hospital/Clinical Area   |
|--|--|
| <p>Screening – as <a href="#">per Section 70 of the Health Act</a> – <b>Section 70 issued, for household members of a person who has been at a NZ location of interest or who has been categorised as a close contact – 29 August 2021</b></p> <p>See paragraph where this does not apply to persons who are required to provide an essential health service</p>   | <p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Impact on workflow,</li> <li>• ability to supervise and support students in practice</li> <li>• skill-mix of staff</li> <li>• provider ability to stream suspected/probable and non-COVID</li> <li>• student level/year</li> <li>• pre-screening of patients where indicated</li> </ul> |
| <p>Vaccination as per COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021</p> <p>Students and lecturers who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will not</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) have access to DHB clinical placements/settings:</li> </ol> <p>or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) performing (or involved with) Aerosol Generating Procedures or swabbing teams.</li> </ol> |  |

<sup>5</sup><https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/covid-19-protection-framework/>

### Appendix 3

#### COVID 19 - Self-identification and self-assessment of underlying health issues and declaration

##### Purpose of self-identification and self-assessment

This self-assessment can assist you in identifying any underlying health issues that may need to be referred to your placement area, and to identify if the Clinical/Practicum Placement Team need to undertake a more detailed assessment to inform whether workplace restrictions or modifications are necessary to protect you.

##### Why should you do a self-assessment?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is part of a large and diverse family of viruses that cause illnesses such as the common cold. In January 2020, a new or novel coronavirus was identified in humans; none of us having immunity to that virus, which has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation. We are now living with the highly contagious COVID-19 variant operating within a COVID-19 Protection Framework and it is important to update our information and planning.

So that we can allow students to return to placements, we urgently need to identify individuals who may be vulnerable to the effects from COVID-19 so we can identify any placement restrictions or modifications required. In addition to this we need to know individuals (students & staff) vaccination status due to the Vaccination Mandate.

Given the urgency of the situation, we are asking students to **self-identify** and **self-assess** their own underlying health issues.

##### Underlying Health Conditions

The following medical issues have been linked with increased risk from COVID-19. Do you have any of these underlying health conditions (tick as many as required):

- Heart disease
- Lung disease
- Diabetes
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Conditions causing immunocompromised states
- Individuals on immunosuppressant medications, including long-term treatment with steroids / prednisolone
- Liver or kidney disease
- Cancer
- Pregnancy

If you have a condition or think you may have a medical condition that may make you vulnerable to COVID-19, the Clinical Placement Team at your tertiary institute needs to be made aware as soon as possible. The Team will review your self-assessment and collate the responses. This information will be used to ensure that the appropriate action can be taken to protect your health when planning and organising placements. This action may include your placement being withdrawn at this time. If this is the case, someone from the Clinical/Practicum Placement Team at your tertiary institute will contact you to discuss. Students attending DHB linked placements will have their information updated on the DHB spreadsheet and shared with the appropriate DHB as required. *You can find out more about how we will use and share this information in our [collection notice](#). You do not have to complete this form, but if you choose not to, you may not be able to complete your programme of study.*

##### Student declaration

*You can find out more about how we will use and share this information in our [collection notice](#). You do not have to complete this form, but if you choose not to, you may not be able to complete your programme of*

study.

|  |  |                  |   |                  |
|--|--|------------------|---|------------------|
| <b>Please complete the following details:</b>  |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Name</b>  |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Student Number</b>  |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Contact Mobile Phone</b>  |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Contact Email</b>   |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Programme</b>   |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Have you been Fully COVID-19 Vaccinated?<br/>(Circle appropriate answer)</b>  | <b>Date of 1st dose</b>  |                  | <b>Date of 2<sup>nd</sup> dose</b>        |                  |
|  | <b>Date of booster</b>   |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Mask Fit/Seal Check</b>   | <b>Date</b>  |                  | <b>Donning/Doffing training completed</b> |                  |
| <b>Mask Fit Test Passed</b>  | <b>Date</b>  |                  | <b>Mask Model</b>                         |                  |
| <b>Do you work in paid employment</b>  | <b>If yes, state where and give some details of your role:</b> |                  |   |                  |
| <b>Note</b><br>It is expected that you will notify your employer if you are returning to clinical placement so they can manage their responsibilities around Covid-19 tracing. |  |                  |   |                  |
| <b>I believe that I have a condition that may make me vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19? [Type or Circle appropriate answer]</b>   |  |                  |   | <b>YES or NO</b> |
| <b>I am over the age of 70</b>   |  |                  |   | <b>YES or NO</b> |
| <b>Is anyone in your household over 70 and/or have a condition that may make them vulnerable? [Circle the appropriate answer]</b>  |  |                  |   | <b>YES or NO</b> |
| <b>I consent to this information being released to my placement organisation</b>   | <b>YES/NO</b>  | <b>Signature</b> | <b>Date</b>                               |                  |
| <b>Any other comments/concerns:</b>  |  |                  |   |                  |

**FOR Tertiary Institute Programme Director TO COMPLETE:**

|   |             |                     |             |  |
|---|-------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Date of assessment</b>                       |             |                     |             |  |
| <b>Actions agreed as a result of assessment</b> |             |                     |             |  |
| <b>Name</b>                                     |             | <b>Signature</b>    |             |  |
| <b>Date</b>                                     |             |                     |             |  |
| <b>DHB Spreadsheet updated</b>                  | <i>Date</i> | <b>DHB informed</b> | <i>Date</i> |  |

**Privacy notice for collection of COVID-19 vaccination status information**

*This privacy notice relates to the Education provider/University's collection of health information about your*



*COVID-19 vaccination status. We need to collect information that identifies you and information about your COVID-19 vaccination status, including the dates you were vaccinated. We have limited the information collected to that which is necessary for the purpose of managing your clinical placement as part of your programme of study.*

*We will use the information you provide in the form only to coordinate your clinical placement, and meet the requirements of the Ministry of Health (and relevant District Health Boards (DHBs)), to ensure that students on clinical placements do not pose a risk to the public. This will include disclosing information about your specific COVID-19 vaccination status to the relevant clinical service provider (CSP) prior to the commencement of a clinical placement, and generating reports on COVID-19 vaccination numbers for the Ministry of Health or DHBs. We will not use or share this information in any other way, unless this is permitted or required by law.*

*While you do not have to provide us with the information requested, not doing so will mean:*

- the University will not be in a position to advise the relevant CSP that you have had the COVID-19 vaccinations required to attend the clinical placement, and*
- the CSP will not therefore be able to accept you on the clinical placement, and*
- you will not meet the prescribed clinical placement requirements, and*
- you will not therefore be able to meet the requirements of the programme.*

*You can find more information about the way the Education provider/University manages personal information in the Education provider/University's Privacy Statement, including how to access or correct the personal information we hold about you, and how we keep it secure.*