

Student Placements in NSW Health

Summary NSW Health supports the development of workforce ready graduates via student placements. This Policy establishes the minimum standards, systems and requirements that NSW Health Organisations and Education Institutions must follow when arranging student placements in the NSW public health system.

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Distributed to Ministry of Health, Public Health System, NSW Ambulance Service, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Health Associations Unions, Tertiary Education Institutes

Audience Nursing and Midwifery; Allied Health Staff; Dental and Oral Health; Clinical Placement Coordinators

Secretary, NSW Health

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is mandatory for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.



NSW Health

POLICY DIRECTIVE

Student Placements in NSW Health

POLICY STATEMENT

NSW Health supports the development of workforce ready graduates by enabling student placements which form part of a tertiary education program of study.

This Policy establishes the minimum standards, systems and requirements that Public Health Organisations and Education Institutions must follow when organising, managing and deploying students to placements in the NSW public health system.

SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

This Policy is implemented and actioned through the Student Placement Program. This Policy establishes the way in which the program is delivered and implemented.

Sets out the governance structures that enable the Student Placement Program and establishes the Student Placement Governance Committee as the body to oversee the implementation of this Policy and its programmatic delivery.

Establishes the advisory and consultative structures that support the Student Placement Governance Committee.

Recognises the [Student Placement Agreement](#) as the main legal framework and contractual document that establishes a partnership between a Public Health Organisation and the Education Institution when planning on delivering placements for students.

Stipulates the requirements of legislation, policy and regulation students and the Institution Staff must comply with to participate in or support a placement through the Compliance and Verification process and the Mandatory Training requirements.

Sets out the workplace requirements and expectations of students and the Education Institution in participating in a placement.

Recognises ClinConnect as the formal information and data storage and processing system for the Student Placement Program and specifies its operational policies.

Outlines the mechanisms for and the conditions under which placements can be deferred, cancelled or terminated.

Outlines the timeframes within which necessary actions must be taken to enable a student to commence a placement.

It is supported by [Student Placement Central](#), a centralised online location for student placement information on the Health Education and Training Institute website, to which this Policy provides direct hyperlinks to relevant documents. Student Placement Central is the repository of the forms, information sheets and other operational supports that assist in the local delivery of the Student Placement Program.



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POLICY DIRECTIVE

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Amendment Notes
PD2022_049 October-2022	Deputy Secretary, Governance, Workforce and Corporate	The review of student placements in NSW Health focusses on consolidating information contained in the NSW Health Policy Directive <i>Clinical Placements in NSW Health Policy</i> (PD2016_057) and the supporting NSW Health Guideline <i>Guidelines for Clinical Placements in NSW Health</i> (GL2018_009) into one policy document.
April 2018 (GL2018_009)	Deputy Secretary, Governance, Workforce and Corporate	Guideline amended to separate Mandatory Training requirements from pre-placement verification requirements.
December 2016 (PD2016_057)	Deputy Secretary, Governance, Workforce and Corporate	Revised policy based on consultation with key stakeholders includes development of Guidelines for Clinical Placements in NSW Health.

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1. BACKGROUND

The Student Placement Program delivers processes, and procedures with education providers to ensure that Students in health-related courses have relevant clinical or non-clinical experience before graduating, ensuring the skills and experience that will deliver an ongoing stream of work ready graduates.

1.1. About this document

The purpose of this document is to outline the processes, procedures and supporting systems that enable the implementation of the Student Placement Program in NSW Health.

This document must be read in conjunction with the [Student Placement Agreement](#) and [Student Placement Central](#) website.

1.2. Key definitions

Course	A program of study leading to a qualification offered by the provider where education in a clinical setting or non-clinical setting forms a part. The course will be accredited with the relevant national body where required and set out in Schedule 1 of the Student Placement Agreement.
Education Institution	The party that is responsible for the delivery of an accredited course of training or education to Students in a Public Health Organisation which can be in a clinical or non-clinical setting. A provider must be a: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Registered Training Organisation (RTO) being a provider registered by the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) (or a state regulator) to deliver nationally recognised VET training and qualifications; or ii. University or Higher Education Provider registered as a provider for the purposes of the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).
Facility	Each hospital facility site or service of the Public Health Organisation which is specified in Schedule 1 of the SPA.
Institution Staff	A person nominated, engaged by and reporting to the Institution and approved by the Public Health Organisation to provide education, supervision and assessment of Students on Student placement and whose details have been notified to the Public Health Organisation in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Student Placement Agreement.

Orientation	A document or process intended to familiarise the Student with the various aspects of the workplace in which the Student placement is being undertaken, including work health and safety requirements.
Patient	A person or persons who receive(s) a health care service provided by a Facility, including persons receiving health care services at a location other than the facility, including without limitation, at a person's home.
Patient Information	Personal Information about a current or former Patient of the Public Health Organisation as described by the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> (NSW), the <i>Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002</i> (NSW).
Public Health Organisation	<p>The organisation responsible for the provision of one or more Student placements. A Public Health Organisation is defined in <i>section 7</i> of the <i>Health Services Act 1997</i> (NSW) and includes Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and Statutory Health Corporations.</p> <p>For the purpose of the Student Placement Agreement and this Policy Directive, a Public Health Organisation also includes entities of the Health Administration Corporation established under the <i>Health Administration Act 1982</i> (NSW) including NSW Health Pathology, NSW Ambulance, eHealth NSW, HealthShare NSW, Health Infrastructure.</p> <p>A Public Health Organisation does not refer to a singular facility, service or entity.</p>
Student	A person enrolled in a course that requires a Student Placement for successfully awarding of the qualification; or who are undertaking an elective unit or units of study with an education provider which requires a Student placement within a Public Health Organisation.
Student Placement	The provision of supervised practical experience, education or training that must be completed to satisfy awarding of the relevant qualification to the Student.
Student Placement Agreement	The legal agreement between a Public Health Organisation and an education provider that provides a time limited framework for enabling Student placements and the broad parameters of those placements at facilities or services delivered by the Public Health Organisation.

Supervision	The organised and approved mentoring or preceptor (on-the-spot) education by a qualified person in a clinical or non-clinical setting for Students.
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1.3. Legal and legislative framework

Student placements in NSW Public Health Organisations must comply with all laws in force in NSW including the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW), the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW) and the relevant privacy principles contained in that legislation.

2. GOVERNANCE

The Student Placement Program is complex and multifaceted. It requires systemic, operational and advisory governance structures to ensure the Program is responsive and continues to meet its purpose.

The NSW Ministry of Health, Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch provides strategic policy and overarching leadership for Student placements in NSW Health. The Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) support this leadership through statewide operations, governance and management of Student placements, verification processes and the ClinConnect system.

2.1. Program Governance

Program Governance is provided through the Student Placement Governance Committee (SPGC). The Terms of Reference are located on Student Placement Central. The Terms of Reference outline the scope, functions and membership of the committee.

Executive support for this Committee is provided by the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI). General advisory support for committee members is provided by HETI and the Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch.

2.1.1. Operational Advice

The Student Placement Governance Committee is supported by the Student Placements Operational Advisory Committee (SPOAC). The Terms of Reference are located on Student Placement Central.

The Terms of Reference outline the scope, functions and membership of the committee.

Executive support for this sub-committee is provided by HETI.

2.1.2. Program Advisory Support

The Student Placement Governance Committee is able to seek formal advice from program partners by establishing sub-committees or ad-hoc committees in line with its Terms of Reference.

Terms of Reference and an initial proposed sunset provision for each sub-committee is required. Sub-committees should be established to seek specific advice and have a specific and limited scope of work.

Support for sub-committees with a structural or policy focus will be provided by the NSW Ministry of Health's Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch. Support for sub-committees with an operational focus will be provided by HETI.

2.2. Local Governance

The Public Health Organisation should establish a robust and locally responsive governance process for the Program. This can be facilitated by establishing a governance committee or through existing governance structures.

3. ESTABLISHING A STUDENT PLACEMENT

3.1. Student Placement Agreement

An executed [Student Placement Agreement](#) is required between a Public Health Organisation and an Education Institution to establish a Student Placement. The Student Placement Agreement template is located on [Student Placement Central](#).

Agreements must be with the Public Health Organisation and not a specific facility, service or agency within a Public Health Organisation.

An Education Institution wishing to establish a Student Placement Agreement with one or more Public Health Organisation for the first time must contact the Student Placement Coordinator at the relevant Public Health Organisation. A list of the [Placement Coordinators](#) is located at Student Placement Central.

The Public Health Organisation reserves the right to determine whether to enter into a Student Placement Agreement with an Education Institution.

An executed (signed) Student Placement Agreement is required between an Education Institution and a Public Health Organisation and must be validly executed on behalf of both the Public Health Organisation and Education Institution (including Schedules) prior to a Student commencing a placement.

The Public Health Organisation and the Education Institution must comply with all the terms of the Student Placement Agreement for the respective Student Placement once the Student Placement Agreement is signed by both parties.

Subject to the requirement set out in the Student Placement Agreement the Public Health Organisation is responsible for various matters relating to the Student Placement including, but not limited to, the following:

- Providing the Student with access to Facilities to support the Student Placement
- Providing the Student with reasonable access to patients to complete the Student Placement
- Providing the Student with access to use and storage of Patient Information as is reasonably necessary for the completion of the Student Placement

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- Providing the Student with access to materials, equipment, amenities as reasonably required to undertake the Student Placement
 - Where practicable, providing the Student with access to a library, email addresses, internet, locker, change room, dining facilities and parking
 - Orientation and induction
 - Requiring compliance with the Student state-wide mandatory training requirements, a list of which is available on Student Placement Central
 - Providing access to relevant policies, guidelines and procedures, a list of which is available on Student Placement Central
 - Verification of Student compliance with workplace laws, policies, procedures and codes of conduct (detailed in Section 5 *Compliance and Verification*)
 - Providing a StaffLink ID to the Student to access NSW Health Systems and facilities
 - Ensuring capacity for placement including the current and ongoing safety and wellbeing of staff involved in the Student Placement Program.

Subject to the requirements set out in the Student Placement Agreement the Education Institution is responsible for various matters relating to the Student placement including, but not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring Institution Staff and Students are aware of, complete and observe the policies, procedures and mandatory training while on the Student placement
- Supervision of and teaching to, the Students
- Using ClinConnect for booking and managing Student placements
- Student assessment
- Administration and conduct of the course during the placement
- Ensuring Students are aware of and observe the various aspects relating to access to Patients and Patient Information as set out in clause 5.17 of the Student Placement Agreement
- Notifying Students of the preconditions for undertaking Student placements including visa and immigration status (for Students who are not Australian citizens), Australian Health Professional Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) (which is required prior to the commencement of the Student Placement and for the duration of the Student placement) and any other preconditions
- Complying with the NSW Health Policy Directive *Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks* ([PD2019_003](#))
- Advising Students and Institution Staff of the risks of contracting or transmitting infectious diseases during the Student Placement and the requirements for compliance with relevant NSW Health Policy Directives;
- The ongoing adherence of all Students and staff to compliance checks
- Teaching aids and equipment

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- Student dress and identification
 - Student illness and absenteeism.

The Student Placement Agreement details various other terms including, but not limited to, governance arrangement, operational arrangements, means by which Student Placements can be cancelled or deferred, privacy and confidentiality, indemnity insurance and dispute resolution and necessary functions to enable the partnership between the Public Health Organisation and the Education Institution.

Once a new Student Placement Agreement has been executed (signed), the Public Health Organisation must inform Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) of the new Institution so they can be given access to ClinConnect.

3.2. Student Placement

An Education Institution with a pre-existing Student Placement Agreement must use ClinConnect to initiate a request for a Student placement. The steps for a new and existing Education Institution are outlined on [Student Placement Central](#). Students must not approach Public Health Organisations or HETI directly for placement requests.

It is at the absolute discretion of the Public Health Organisation as to whether or not to agree to a Student Placement for a particular Student, taking into account factors such as what qualification the Student is undertaking, the clinical needs of the Public Health Organisation and any other resourcing issues.

4. CLINCONNECT AND DATA USE

4.1. ClinConnect

ClinConnect is a secure web-based application used to manage all Student placements in Public Health Organisations. It is used to schedule Student placements, book and manage individual placements and keep a record of Student and Institution staff compliance with NSW Health.

All Student placements in NSW Health must be organised using ClinConnect. The *ClinConnect Operational Guide* is located on Student Placement Central.

Management and Operational support for ClinConnect is provided by the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI).

4.2. Data

ClinConnect is a significant repository of data, the use of which is managed by the Governance Committee in line with the NSW Health Guideline *NSW Health Data Governance Framework* ([GL2019_002](#)).

4.3. Data privacy and ClinConnect

Student and Institution Staff data will be stored on ClinConnect, StaffLink, My Health Learning and connected NSW Health Systems.

Compliance documentation is stored securely by the Public Health Organisation that undertook the verification process and in line with standard NSW Health document management practices.

During a Student placement, data stored on ClinConnect is used for identification, administration and compliance purposes. After placement, data may be de-identified and used for evaluative and planning purposes.

A restricted number of NSW Health Staff can access personal data only for specific purposes. These staff are bound by the NSW Health Policy Directive *NSW Health Code of Conduct* ([PD2015_049](#)).

5. COMPLIANCE AND VERIFICATION

5.1. Compliance

Students and Institution Staff must undertake standard workforce compliance checks and maintain compliance with all mandatory policy requirements and directives set out by NSW Health and the Public Health Organisation through-out the duration of each Student placement (**Compliance Requirements**).

The Public Health Organisations are responsible for informing the Education Institution of the compliance requirements. Information about [compliance and verification](#) is available on Student Placement Central.

The Education Institution is responsible for ensuring all Students are informed about the compliance requirements and that Students provide all relevant documentation for verification.

Students are responsible for the provision of all necessary original or certified documentation to enable verification.

5.2. Verification

The Public Health Organisation is responsible for the verification process.

The Public Health Organisation must verify Student and Institution Staff compliance and record all necessary information in ClinConnect within ten (10) working days of receiving the compliance documentation. The Public Health Organisation reserves the right to reject any documentation that cannot be verified as authentic.

The Education Institution is responsible for creating the Student and Institution Staff profiles. A process diagram that outlines the verification process is located on Student Placement Central.

Students must be verified as Compliant or Temporary Compliant by the Public Health Organisation at least seven (7) days prior to the Student placement commencing. ClinConnect will automatically cancel a Student's placement where this requirement is not met.

5.3. Temporary Compliance with vaccination and testing

A six-month temporary compliance will be granted to Students in specific circumstances. These circumstances are outlined in the NSW Health Policy Directive *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specific Infectious Diseases* ([PD2022_030](#)).

Students with temporary compliance will be allowed to commence a placement and Institution Staff in this situation will be allowed to commence facilitation. Full compliance is expected to be achieved by the Student in due course.

5.4. Students with an existing or pending criminal record

Students with an existing criminal record or pending criminal charges are required to apply to NSW Health for approval to undertake placement. A discretionary assessment of a Student's suitability will be conducted.

This assessment will be determining the risk the Student may pose to potential cohorts they may interact with during placement. The application form is located on Student Placement Central.

The Education Institution is responsible for undertaking risk assessment of Institution Staff with disclosable outcomes.

5.5. Ongoing Compliance

Students must maintain ongoing compliance with necessary legislation, policies, codes of conduct, regulations and local requirements during the Student Placement. The Education Institution and Student are required to notify the Public Health Organisation of any matter or circumstances that may affect a Student's compliant status.

6. STUDENT ONBOARDING AND ACCESS

6.1. Orientation

The Public Health Organisation will conduct an Orientation for all Students and Institution Staff to familiarise them with the facility and the amenities they are likely to access during placement. This will include access to the Facility, public transport links, food and grocery retailers on site or nearby, access within the Facility and any grounds, research and library facilities, areas where access is not allowed and any known events or celebratory days due to be held during the placement.

6.2. StaffLink ID

A StaffLink ID is a single NSW Health identification number assigned for life, activated and deactivated as necessary. Each Student will be issued with a StaffLink ID via email two weeks prior to their first placement commencement along with a link to set a password.

This will be sent to the email address issued and provided by the Education Institution.

6.3. My Health Learning access

Students will use their StaffLink ID and password to access My Health Learning to complete mandatory training modules.

My Health Learning will be activated thirteen (13) days prior to each placement commencing and deactivated on the last day of placement.

6.4. Mandatory Training

Students are required to complete all mandatory training modules endorsed for Students by the Mandatory Training Standing Committee. Students must complete the mandatory training within 30-days after commencing their placement. A list of endorsed [state-wide mandatory training modules](#) is located on Student Placement Central.

Public Health Organisations must integrate mandatory training into local Student orientation within the first week of placement. Students must complete all state-wide mandatory training modules directly in My Health Learning.

6.5. Access to health systems and devices

Each Public Health Organisation will determine Student access to local applications and devices for the purposes of placement. This will include access to laptops, tablets and computers as well as access to use of specific applications.

7. STUDENT AND STAFF ATTENDANCE ON SITE

Each Education Institution is responsible for informing the Public Health Organisation of Student and Institution Staff attendance on site and any absences.

7.1. Student attendance

Student attendance to meet Course requirements is the responsibility of the Student and the Education Institution.

The Public Health Organisation is responsible to record attendance of Students in ClinConnect from all areas of study with the exception of medicine. The Education Institution is responsible for recording attendance in ClinConnect for placements in medicine.

The Education Institution will notify the Public Health Organisation of the Student illness or absenteeism where attendance is anticipated. Similarly, the Public Health Organisation will notify the Education Institution if absenteeism occurs.

7.2. Institution Staff Details

The Education Institution is responsible for informing the Public Health Organisation of all the staff members who will be present on-site facilitating placements in NSW Health facilities ten (10) working days before the period of facilitation.

This includes name, position and contact information.

8. PATIENT AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

The Public Health Organisation will make available to Students and Institution Staff:

- Reasonable access to Patients for the purpose of completing the Student Placement, subject to the authority of the Student's workplace supervisor, Patient or guardian consent, and the treatment needs of the Patient; and
- Access to use and storage of Patient Information as is reasonably necessary for the Student Placement provided such access, use and storage of Patient Information is consistent with the NSW Health guidelines (including the *NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information* ([Privacy Manual for Health Information](#))), NSW Health policies and relevant privacy legislation including that:
 - access to Patient Information is with the approval and under the direction of the Student's supervisor; and
 - access does not include photocopying or transcribing records containing Patient Information or taking such records off-site.

9. ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

The Public Health Organisation will only provide access to specific materials, equipment and amenities required for the Student Placement or as determined.

9.1. Motor vehicles

Institution Staff and Students may use NSW Health motor vehicles for activities related to the Student Placement subject to the use of the motor vehicles being specifically authorised by the relevant Chief Executive or authorised delegate of the Public Health Organisations.

10. DEFERRAL, SUSPENSION, VARIATION OR CANCELLATION OF STUDENT PLACEMENTS AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The process for deferral, suspension, variation or cancellation of Student Placements is stipulated in the [Student Placement Agreement](#).

The Public Health Organisation may, in its absolute discretion, defer, suspend, vary or cancel any agreed Student Placement where unforeseen circumstances or causes beyond the control of the Public Health Organisation cause or threaten major disruption to patient services or the provision of any Student Placements.

The requirements and processes for disciplinary matters are set out in the Student Placement Agreement. It is noted that:

- discipline of Students is the responsibility of the Education Institution; and
- the Public Health Organisation retains the right to direct the removal of a Student or Institution Staff subject to the procedural fairness requirements set out in the Student Placement Agreement.



Any dispute in relation to a term of the Student Placement Agreement will be managed through the dispute resolution process set out at clause 26 of the Student Placement Agreement.

Disputes that relate to the conditions on which a Public Health Organisation decides to defer, suspend, vary or terminate a placement or the individuals or groups impacted are to be managed by the Liaison Officer and Authorised Officer of each party through clause 29 of the Student Placement Agreement.

11. STUDENT PLACEMENTS NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY

The [Student Placement Agreement](#) excludes placements for:

- A person on Student Placement while undertaking a course as part of their employment by the Public Health Organisation
- Higher degree by research (Masters by research or a PhD)
- Trainees who are employed by a Public Health Organisation

The ClinConnect system cannot support placements for:

- General Practitioners
- Australian Defence Force personnel
- Student work experience
- Voluntary placements or placements not required for course completion.