



Nursing and Allied Health Student Clinical Placement Policy

1. BACKGROUND

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) recognises the role it has as a provider of student clinical placement opportunities.

This policy relates to all students from the following disciplines, enrolled in a training program with an accredited Australian Tertiary Institution, Vocational Education and Training Provider, Registered Training Organisation or accredited re-registration / refresher program provider (hereafter identified as the Education Institution [EI]):

- Nursing
- Midwifery
- Allied Health

This policy relates to clinical placements where the student is considered supernumerary and not an employee of the health service for the duration of the placement (e.g. postgraduate midwifery students employed by WACHS to undertake their clinical practicum are not included within this policy). This placement must form part of the curriculum requirements for the student's designated course or program.

The scope of this policy does not include:

- work experience (e.g. Structured Workplace Learning) students
- volunteers (including student community service placements)
- students enrolled in International EI*
- student placements outside of the criteria stipulated above.

* WACHS will not accept students on clinical placement from international universities due the complexity of placement logistics and management of risk.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Clinical Placement Agreements

This policy is underpinned by WA Health Student Clinical Placement Agreements with EI. WA Health has agreements with a range of Western Australian and interstate educational institutions. All agreements can be viewed at the [Department of Health Student Clinical Placements at Public Hospitals – Agreements website](#).

These agreements cover a wide range of issues including responsibilities of education institutions and health services, orientation, health screening, supervision and similar. Student coordinators are required to make themselves familiar with the relevant agreement for their professional group.

Instances may occur where student clinical placements are requested from an EI that does not have a current agreement with WA Health.

The WA Health, Legal and Legislative Services Directorate do not recommend the use of individualised clinical placement agreements with an EI. All EI are to negotiate a WA standard Student Clinical Placement Agreement for the appropriate professional group concerned. Should a request be made to a site to place a student from an EI that does not hold a current agreement (see above), they are to be directed to WA Health Legal and Legislative Services so a WA agreement can be negotiated prior to the placement of students. Contact details can be found [here](#).

2.2 Placement Coordination

The WACHS accepts placement from a number of EI, with coordination of placement varying between region and profession. EI typically liaise directly with relevant contacts within WACHS with regards to requests and coordination of clinical placement.

Liaison between WACHS and EI is to include:

- nominated point of contact between the site and the EI
- confirmation of site placement capacity or offers for placements
- agreement on the scheduling of student placements
- agreement of placement requirements and supports
- compliance with the WACHS Nursing and Allied Health Student Clinical Placement Policy and the WA Health Student Clinical Placement Agreements.

Placement coordination and provision includes two key roles:

Student Coordinator

The WACHS employee designated to coordinate clinical placement(s) on behalf of the WACHS site(s) for the relevant profession(s).

Supervisor

The health professional designated as responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the student for the duration of the placement. This may involve a single or multiple supervisors. Across different health disciplines, the term supervisor may be interchanged with the following terms – preceptor, clinical coach, clinical instructor, mentor, and clinical teacher. For consistency, the term Supervisor will be used within this document.

Note: The “student coordinator” and “supervisor” roles may be undertaken by the same person or by multiple people at the site.

2.3 Supervisory Payments

A number of university schools within Western Australia and interstate currently provide a supervisory payment to organisations hosting students on clinical placement. Additionally, bursaries and/or scholarships are also available which include a supervisory payment as part of the scholarship allowances. Payments may be financial (e.g. agreed dollar value per student hosted) or non-financial (book vouchers, resource provision, continuing professional development).

WACHS health professionals and managers are ethically bound to ensure that provision of a supervision payment does not impact on decision-making for hosting students from specific university campuses. Placements should be offered and accepted equitably between Western Australia training institutions, regardless of the provision of supervisory payments.

All supervisory payments (financial or non-financial) provided by a training institution or student bursary / scholarship must be directed to the organisation providing the clinical placement. Within the terms and conditions of employment as a WACHS employee, any payment (financial or non-financial) received while undertaking duties as a WACHS employee, including supervision of a student, must not be directed to or accepted by the individual employee for personal use.

Health professionals must notify their manager when it is evident they will be hosting a student with a supervision payment attached, both financial and non-financial. The appropriately delegated manager is to provide advice to the supervisor and training institution with regards to the payment process (e.g. invoicing) and support internal management of the provided funding (cost-centre allocation and funds expenditure).

2.4 Screening

Immunisation

EI are responsible for ensuring that students are screened for and vaccinated against the following vaccine preventable diseases: Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Influenza and Pertussis. Mantoux or Quantiferon test to determine Tuberculosis exposure is also required.

Student immunisation requirements are consistent with the Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0388/12 Health Care Worker Immunisation](#).

Conscientious Objection

If a student refuses to be screened and/or vaccinated on the basis of conscientious objection, the EI must notify the WACHS site of the student's refusal. If the student coordinator feels patient safety may be compromised by the refusal, she/he can refuse clinical placement of the student.

MRSA

EI are responsible for providing evidence that the student has Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) clearance (swabs) if the student has been determined to be an MRSA contact, as per Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0478/13 Infection Prevention and Control of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus \(MRSA\) in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities \(HCFs\)](#).

Screening of individual students is therefore not routinely required by WACHS sites. Sites with demonstrated risk may have a requirement for additional MRSA screening requirements. This is to be supported by a site procedure.

Where additional screening is required to support the site procedure (over and above WA Health Policy for MRSA contacts), the site is responsible for the cost of the swabs for students.

General Health Screening

Students are to make the student coordinator aware of any personal and/or health issues which may impact on their clinical placement, including consideration of patient and their own safety and health service standards of patient care. The EI is responsible for advising students of this requirement.

Criminal Record Check

EI are responsible for ensuring that students provide evidence of criminal record screening to the placement sites as per Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0275/10 Criminal Record Screening Policy and Guidelines](#). The WACHS site is responsible for sighting the student Criminal Record Check card prior to or at the commencement of clinical placement.

Aged Care Clearance

An Aged Care Clearance (National Police Certificate) is required by students if they are providing care within a WACHS site designated as an Australian Government aged care subsidised service, in accordance with the [WACHS Aged Care Criminal Record Policy](#).

If an Aged Care Clearance is required, the student coordinator is to advise the EI of this requirement prior to placement to allow students sufficient time to obtain the appropriate documentation. The WACHS site is responsible for sighting the student Aged Care Clearance prior to or at the commencement of clinical placement.

If a student is likely to only have incidental exposure to an environment where Aged Care Clearance is required it may be more suitable for a student to be excluded from these activities rather than seeking clearance.

Note: A National Police Certificate for aged care clearance is a different screen from a Criminal Record Check.

Working with Children Check

EI are responsible for ensuring that students provide evidence of a Working with Children Check to the WACHS site. The WACHS site is responsible for sighting a student's Working with Children Check prior to or at the commencement of clinical placement. See Department of Health [WA Health Working with Children Check Policy and Guideline OD 0160/08](#) and the [WACHS Working with Children Procedure](#) for individual requirement for a Working with Children Checks.

2.5 Supervision

A suitably qualified WACHS employee or Clinical Instructor provided by the Education Institution must supervise the student at all times. The supervisor remains accountable for the student's actions, including responsibility for delegated patient care. Where the supervisor is external to WACHS, the WACHS employee retains overarching accountability for patient care.

Supervision may be direct or indirect in nature, according to the nature of activities delegated. Direct supervision is defined as supervision provided when the supervisor is present, observes, and works with the student being supervised. Indirect supervisor describes where the supervisor works in the same facility but does not constantly observe the student, however is readily accessible.

Nursing

At all times, it is intended that the student be under the direct supervision of the supervisor.

Allied Health

Supervision is a mix of direct and indirect, as determined appropriate by the supervisor.

It is recommended that supervisors possess the necessary competencies to supervise a student. Supervisors are encouraged to undertake education around the role of the supervisor prior to undertaking this role.

2.6 Ethico-Legal Practice

Scope of Practice

Due diligence is required by supervisors in determining the scope of practice of students and suitability of activities to be delegated to students. The nature and content of clinical placements, including activities delegated to students, must consider the scope of practice of the profession, organisation and supervisor.

Student

The student is responsible for working within their own scope of practice. Supervisors are to be aware of the current stage of training and scope of practice of students under their supervision. Where supervisors are unclear of the current scope of practice (stage) of a student in training, the EI is to be contacted for clarification.

Professional

Supervisors are only permitted to supervise within their own scope of practice.

Organisation

Supervisors are only permitted to supervise within the scope of allowable practice of the professional group within WACHS and local site context.

Consent

Student must abide by the Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0324/11 Consent to Treatment Policy for the Western Australian Health System 2011](#)

In addition to providing consent for treatment, the patient must provide informed consent to allow provision of care services by a student. Consent may be implied or verbal and is not required to be documented in the patient medical record.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Whilst on placement, students must comply with [Operational Directive OD 0190/09 WA Open Disclosure Policy: Communication and Disclosure Requirements for Health Professionals Working in Western Australia](#) and [Operational Circular OP 2050/06 Patient Confidentiality and Divulging Patient Information to Third Parties](#).

Students must also sign an agreement relating to confidentiality and willingness to comply with rules and regulations of the health service at the commencement of the placement. A standard form for use within WACHS is available at [Appendix 1](#).

Consequences of breach of confidentiality are detailed in the Confidentiality Agreement. It is the responsibility of the EI to enforce actions relating to breaches of confidentiality.

Medical Records and Documentation

Student access to patient information, including medical records, is limited to those consenting patients for which the student is providing care. In situations where the students are privy to patient information beyond those in which they are providing direct care (e.g. team meetings and clinical handover), confidentiality of information is to be reinforced.

Where a student is required to make a notation in a patient's permanent medical record, the entry will be as specified by the student coordinator/supervisor. This may involve discussion regarding entry format, process for review of entry and requirements for co-signing. Entries must be consistent with organisation policy and standards for documentation in medical records.

All student entries in a patient's permanent medical record must be co-signed by the student's supervisor.

Codes of Conduct

Students and supervisors must abide by the organisational and professional codes of conduct, ethics and practice.

It is acknowledged that in the rural and remote environment the professional and personal interactions of students with patients and supervisors may overlap. Supervisors and students must demonstrate appropriate professional relationships and boundaries at all times.

Breach of professional practice

Whilst a student is on clinical practice, any breach of professional practice, policy or procedure must be reported to the EI as soon as practically possible. Whilst a student is on clinical placement, the EI continues to be responsible for enforcing disciplinary policy and procedure.

WACHS sites have the right to withdraw or exclude individual students from the clinical areas where a breach of professional practice has occurred, or where the duty of care to patients is compromised (or likely to be compromised). It is the responsibility of the student coordinator at the site to inform the EI of any such exclusion as soon as practically possible.

2.7 Placement Logistics

Orientation

The WACHS site is responsible for providing appropriate orientation to students prior to and at commencement of their student placement. This is to include pre-placement information and orientation to the organisation, community, worksite, and work/clinical area.

Orientation is to include induction to key organisational policies and procedures, including security, safety, emergency policies and procedures.

Students and EI are to be provided with the appropriate pre-placement orientation guide prior to the commencement of the placement.

These are available from the WACHS Internet:

[WACHS Allied Health Rural Student Placement Orientation Guide \(Pre-Placement\)](#) or the [WACHS Nursing Rural Student Placement Orientation Guide \(Pre-Placement\)](#).

Identification

Students are required to wear appropriate identification badges at all times, clearly identifying them as a student. This may include either student identification provided by the university or visitor/student identification provided by the health site, and in accordance with [WACHS Staff Identification Procedure](#) and relevant site procedures on visitor identification.

Emergency Care

WACHS is responsible for providing emergency care for the student and/or EI staff, should they suffer an accident or illness whilst on the premises, as per WACHS staff.

While it is recognised that the EI is the first point of contact regarding student emergencies, there may be instances where this may not be accessible. It is recommended WACHS sites ensure that they have access to contact details for the student for reference in emergency situations. This is primarily important where students are undertaking placement outside of their usual residential area and/or at isolated sites. Provision for collection of this information is included on the Confidentiality for Students Form at [Appendix 1](#).

Uniforms

Students are required to wear the uniform specified by the EI for clinical placements. WACHS sites are not responsible for the supply or laundering of uniforms.

If no uniform is specified by the EI, the student is required to follow the dress standard relevant to the placement site.

Use of WACHS Motor Vehicles

Nursing students on placement within WACHS are not permitted to drive WACHS motor vehicles.

For allied health students on placement within WACHS, permission to drive WACHS vehicles is to be seriously considered, and in most instances is advised against. Where a site deems it necessary for students to drive a WACHS vehicle, approval must be obtained in writing from a relevant Tier 4 manager/director or above level. This may be at an individual student level or whole of site procedure.

If permitted to drive, the student must show evidence of a current and appropriate driver's licence, and as appropriate, rural/remote driving skills. Students must comply with [WACHS Safe Driving Policy](#) and site procedures regarding use of health service vehicles. Students may not drive off-road (non-sealed roads) or drive for long distances.

Home Visiting and Outreach

Whilst on placement, students may only participate in home visiting or outreach services under direct supervision of a supervisor. Whilst undertaking home visiting, students must abide by [WACHS Home Visiting in Community Settings Policy](#).

Accommodation

Where available, health sites are to endeavour to provide and coordinate WACHS accommodation free of charge or at a subsidised rate to students. Where WACHS accommodation is unavailable, the student coordinator is to provide advice to students with regards to alternative accommodation available within the community.

Transport

The WACHS is not responsible for the organisation or provision of transport from the student's home/base to the placement site and for transport within the community (including between accommodation and clinical placement sites). Student coordinators are to provide advice to students with regards to travel options, costs and limitations.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As outlined above.

4. COMPLIANCE

It is a requirement of the WA Health Code of Conduct that employees “comply with all state government policies, standards and Australian laws and understand and comply with all WA Health business, administration and operational directives and policies”. Failure to comply may constitute suspected misconduct under the [WA Health Misconduct and Discipline Policy](#).

5. EVALUATION

Number of formal complaints received in relation to student placements is to be reviewed annually by the Nurse Manger, Workforce Development and the Program Manager, Allied Health.

6. REFERENCES

Legal and Legislative Services Branch, Department of Health. (Various dates.)

Agreements / Memorandums of Understanding for Educational Institution Staff and Students to Have Access to the Premises and Facilities Controlled by the Boards for the Purposes of the Clinical Placement Program (Various Institutions and Disciplines) extracted from the [Department of Health Student Clinical Placements at Public Hospitals – Agreements internet site](#)

7. SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0388/12 Health Care Worker Immunisation](#)

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0478/13 Infection Prevention and Control of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus \(MRSA\) in Western Australian Healthcare Facilities \(HCFs\)](#)

[WA Health Working with Children Check Policy and Guideline OD 0160/08](#)

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0324/11 Consent to Treatment Policy for the Western Australian Health System 2011](#)

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0190/09 WA Open Disclosure Policy: Communication and Disclosure Requirements for Health Professionals Working in Western Australia](#)

[WACHS Safe Driving Policy](#)

[WACHS Home Visiting in Community Settings Policy](#)

[WACHS Aged Care Criminal Record Policy](#)

[WACHS Working with Children Check Procedure](#)

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0275/10 Criminal Record Screening Policy and Guidelines](#)

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Confidentiality Agreement for Students (over page)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

Contact:	Nurse Manager, Workforce Development		
Directorate:	Nursing and Midwifery Services	TRIM Record #	ED-CO-14-77179
Version:	4.00	Date Published:	03 November 2022



Confidentiality Agreement for Students

I understand that as a condition of my placement with the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) I will be bound by this confidentiality statement.

I understand that I may have access to confidential documents (written) or information (verbal or electronic) collected for purposes of client / patient care or for administrative, statistical or other purposes. Such confidential information includes the identity of, and personal and health information about individual persons.

I acknowledge my duty in relation to disclosure of information. I will not divulge any identifying, personal or health information regarding individual persons, except to authorised staff who require such information to carry out the functions of the organisation.

I also undertake to follow other information privacy and security procedures as stipulated by the employer in relation to any personal health information, which I access in the course of my duties. In order to fulfil this undertaking I will ensure that, so far as is within my control:

- such information, whether in the form of paper documents, computerised data or in any other form cannot be viewed by unauthorised persons, and
- that the information is stored in a secure and orderly manner, which prevents unauthorised access.

I further undertake to inform my supervisor immediately if I become aware of any breach of privacy or security relating to the information, which I access in the course of my duties.

Student Signature

Name (Print)

Date

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Please advise of most appropriate person to contact in case of emergency during your placement.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

CRIMINAL SCREENING

WACHS representative to indicate that relevant screening requirements have been sighted, including:

Criminal Record Check (all students)

Working with Children Check (if required)

Aged Care Check (if required)

WACHS

Representative
Signature _____

Designation _____

Name (Print) _____

Date _____

This record is to be stored in accordance with the Record Amendment Principles (2006) and the Privacy Act (1998).