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What is Practice Education and why is it important to Island Health?

Practice Education is the experiential learning component of education that occurs in health service delivery and /or simulated settings ([Provincial Practice Education Guideline](#))

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Advanced Education Skills and Training (AEST) sent memorandums to the VPs Academic, VPs Human Resources, VPs Medicine, Provincial Nursing and Allied Health Council to provide information and direction for the collaboration on student practice during the pandemic response, COVID-19.

To support learner continuity and a future sustainable workforce, both Ministries are encouraging and directing Health Authorities to continue our efforts to support students to complete their programs where possible. There is work being done to prioritize placements for students in their final year(s) of study. The approach we are taking in Island Health aligns with the Ministry's request to be flexible to accommodate unique circumstances and keeping our key priority to maintaining the safety of students, staff, patients, clients and residents within our focus.

- [Memorandum March 23, 2020](#)
- [Memorandum April 8, 2020](#)

Where can I find resources for guidance during the pandemic

The [BC Student Practice Education](#) website has been created to provide a one-stop resource for information related to student placements in healthcare in BC and acts as a repository for information, resources and materials to support the post secondary institutions (PSIs), healthcare organizations (HCOs), and BC government ministries (Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training) that collaboratively and collectively support health student placements in BC.

Links and resources provided here are intended to augment communication and collaboration for all those who support student placements in the health system throughout BC.

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Are there new pre-placement requirements?

- **N95 Fit Testing:** The requirement for fit-testing has temporarily been changed from once per year to once every two years. ([Ministry of Health Policy Communique, March 20, 2020](#)). At this time, in most instances, Health Authorities cannot provide fit testing for students (the exception to this rule are critical care employed student nurses). If a student has not been fit-tested within the past two years and cannot complete this prior to placement, their placement assignments will need to be adjusted accordingly. As the situation evolves, please refer to the [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Allocation Framework](#).
- **Basic Life Support/CPR Certification:** Placements can proceed, regardless of a student's CPR renewal status. Students who need to obtain or renew their certification should work to their skill level and proceed with obtaining certification when these activities resume in our communities.
- **TB Testing:** If students have not already completed TB testing, they may not be able to access this service at this time, dependent upon local capacity, as screening for work or school is a non-essential TB service. Please connect with your health organization contact regarding any students with placements in May or June that may not be able to complete this requirement.
- **Provincial Violence Prevention Classroom Training:** High-risk destinations that require PVPC training will be added to the Destination Profile in HSPnet, including where applicable contact information; however, no classroom sessions are currently being held at this time within the health organizations. Please speak with the destination contact in high-risk areas for alternate arrangements. All online modules continue to be a requirement.

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How do we support social distancing during a practicum?

Island Health will be sure to follow the orders and directives from the PHO and Ministry of Health. We will work with our facility/program leads to ensure both staff, student, faculty and patient/client/resident safety.

A recent article in [The Weekly](#) has some excellent advice to support one another. The best thing we can all do is keep our distance while continuing to support one another. Where existing break space is tight or not sufficient to maintain distance, teams need to find creative solutions together that enable much-needed rest and still maintain personal safety. Nobody who is ill is permitted to be at work.

While social distancing is an important population level intervention, Student Practice Team recognizes it is not practical or necessary in all educational experiences or work places for everyone to be 6 feet apart when providing direct care.

Optional suggestions for following the [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) principles of physical distancing](#):

- When precepting you could use audio- or video-conferencing as appropriate. It is recommended that preceptor and student sit at separate desks and share screens during the teaching/learning process. Where appropriate, consider remote orientation.
- Preceptor and students can drive in separate cars to a client home or for community visits. (Please advise the Student Placement Team if you are considering this idea and ensure you have appropriate insurance coverage in place.)
- Staff could inform clients/caregivers prior to home visit that two people will be attending the home.

What are student and faculty (instructors) responsibilities?

The students are responsible to:

- Maintain a well-defined learning plan that they communicate to the unit and their instructor.
- Communicate their learning needs and objectives.
- Communicate their current level of competency.

Faculty (instructors) are responsible to:

- Orientate self and students to unit; introduce self to CC, CNE, CNL, Manager and Unit Clerk; completes Island Health onboarding requirements.
- Supervise student learning (as required by the Post-Secondary Institution program).
- Verify student competency.
- Collaborate with unit staff to solve actual clinical problems.
- Foster a culture of learning for students with staff.
- Regularly 'check in' with students and staff to ensure timely identification of any issues/concerns.

Household member who has COVID-19 symptoms: Healthcare workers who have a COVID-19 symptomatic household member can safely attend work as long as you are wearing the appropriate PPE and are not experiencing symptoms. If you have concerns, you should connect with your Leader and when at work, adhere to the following precautions:

- Self-monitor daily for signs and symptoms of illness;
- Wear a surgical mask at all times and in all areas of your workplace;
- Follow infection prevention and control protocols including diligent hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment when delivering patient care;
- Reduce close contact with other health care workers and avoid shared spaces where possible;
- Avoid close contact with others when travelling to and from work and between shifts; and
- Self-isolate at home on days when not required at work.

Household who received a positive COVID-19 test result. If you have someone residing in your household who has received a positive COVID-19 test result, you must contact your Leader prior to attending work. When a person tests positive for COVID-19, public health engages in a process called contact tracing to identify who that person's close contacts are. If you are identified as a close contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, Public Health will direct you on what to do. If you are cleared to attend work, you must connect with your Leader and adhere to the precautions outlined above.

PPE Guidance: Students/faculty will usually follow the same PPE protocol as the health care worker preceptor they are working with. In instances where a student/faculty is concerned about transmission of COVID-19 virus or is immunocompromised, the student / faculty may elect to wear a surgical or procedure mask.

Island Health has developed a [PPE during COVID-19 Pandemic Guide](#) to inform the appropriate selection of PPE for the care setting and patient/resident/client scenario.

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Cleaning personal electronic device/phone before and after a clinical placement Island Health Infection Control has developed some protocols, policies and guidelines to help guide cleaning and disinfecting of devices. Please review

https://intranet.viha.ca/departments/infection_prevention/Documents/ipad-cleaning-disinfecting.pdf#search=iPad%20cleaning

https://intranet.viha.ca/departments/infection_prevention/resources/Documents/information-technology-equipment-cleaning-disinfecting-manual.pdf#search=ipad%20cleaning

<https://intranet.viha.ca/pnp/pnpdocs/non-critical-medical-devices-information-management-technology-equipment-cleaning-disinfection.pdf#search=non%2Dcritical%20device>

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Where can I find more information regarding COVID-19?

- [Island Health COVID-19 Public Site](#)
- [Island Health COVID-19 Internal Site](#) (requires log in ID)
- [BC Student Practice Education](#)

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Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please contact Professional Practice Student Practice if you have questions at studentpractice@viha.ca

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