



# GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS ON CLINICAL PLACEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## *Introduction*

Prior to undertaking a professional practicum placement, it is expected that students will attend a briefing session or be able to demonstrate knowledge of the issues covered in the briefing sessions.

Whilst undertaking clinical placements with DHHS, students are expected to comply with the specific "Standards of Behaviour and Conduct"(2005) that have been developed for DHHS employees to provide direction and guidance on responsibility and standards of conduct and performance

Students are also expected to familiarise themselves with the health care agency protocols and policies relating to the area in which they are undertaking placement (eg Occupational Health and Safety procedures, emergency procedures dress code and conduct). It is acknowledged that certain areas within DHHS (eg Correctional Health, Forensic Mental Health)<sup>1</sup> will have additional policies which students must be aware of and adhere to and individual Schools may have additional requirements (eg Infectious Diseases Policy) as outlined in their manuals.

Before being granted access to patient care areas in the DHHS, students are required to sign an undertaking that they have read the following guidelines. Disciplinary action may be taken in the case of breaches under the General Misconduct provisions of the University's Ordinance of Student Discipline (Ordinance 9).

**In extreme cases penalties could include suspension or exclusion from the course.**

### 1 *Dress*

1.1 If not in uniform<sup>2</sup>, students visiting patient contact areas, must be appropriately dressed and conform to the standards of the hospital or practice setting. Your supervisor may require you to wear a white coat.

1.3 Appropriate dress cannot easily be prescribed or itemised, but some examples can be given.

- Generally, neat casual wear is acceptable but very casual wear is not appropriate in most clinical settings<sup>3</sup>. Your supervisor has the capacity to advise on this matter.

<sup>1</sup> Students on placement with Correctional Health and Forensic Mental Health refer Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> Nursing students refer to Appendix 2 in relation to uniform

<sup>3</sup> Eg jeans, T-shirts, trainers are not appropriate wear in clinical settings such as hospital wards.

- Revealing attire generally is considered inappropriate to the work environment (eg necklines, midriff and hemlines).
- More stringent or more relaxed requirements may be necessary for particular areas or activities (e.g. theatre. hyperbaric medicine.)
- Enclosed footwear should be worn in clinical areas to protect from potential sharps and crush injuries.
- Hair that is longer than collar length should be neatly tied back
- Jewellery may be inappropriate in some placements (eg radiography) – advice should be sought from the clinical supervisor.

### 1.2 Identification badges

Security in practice sites is essential. Students must wear official identification badges at all times while in patient care areas of the DHHS. These are to be displayed in an immediately visible position such as the lapel of the white coat, rather than the belt or trouser pocket.

### 1.3 Mobile phones

Mobile telephones are only to be used in accordance with the policy of the relevant hospital or service.

## 2. Medical Records

- 2.1. Medical and prescription records are highly privileged documents and are to be treated with absolute confidentiality. Any significant breach of this instruction will attract serious disciplinary action.
- 2.2. Students have authorisation to access the medical and prescription records of patients on the ward or treatment area to which they are appointed. Students are not authorised to view the records of patients unless they have a particular and appropriate purpose for doing so.
- 2.3. Students are not authorised to consult case notes from Medical Records Department unless they are given specific permission from the clinician in charge of the case. Biomedical Science students require permission from the Lab Manager before accessing records for case studies.
- 2.4. Students must not remove medical and prescription records from the immediate vicinity in which they are accessed (ie the ward or Medical Records Department).

## 3 Examination of Patients

- 3.1 The consent of the ward Clinical Nurse Manager (or deputy) must be obtained before examining or speaking to a patient. Radiography students must obtain consent from the clinical supervisor.
- 3.2 Hygiene is important when examining patients and hands should be washed between each patient contact.

- 3.3 Unless otherwise instructed by an appropriate Senior Clinician, students are required to work in pairs when they examine patients so that there is always a chaperone present.
- 3.4 For paediatric patients, if a parent is not available as a chaperone during an examination, the clinical supervisor should be asked to advise on an appropriate chaperone.
- 3.5 Additional guidelines for examination of patients by medical students are attached as Appendix 3.

#### **4 General Behaviour**

- 4.1 Hygiene is particularly important on the wards prior to examining patients and in practice sites generally and is required on entry to some wards such as ICU and the Cardiac Surgery Unit. Particular attention should be paid to the cleanliness of hands and fingernails.
- 4.2 Medical ethics forbid any personal relationship, currently or subsequently, between staff (including students) and patients. The DHHS "Standards of Behaviour and Conduct" 2005 provides guidance on maintaining professional boundaries with patients. If further guidance is required, the student should seek assistance from the Senior Clinician.
- 4.3 Students are not to hold themselves out to be a fully qualified practitioner or to allow a patient to make this assumption.
- 4.4 Students are expected to display courtesy to all patients and their relatives, fellow workers and staff members during the clinical session.
- 4.5 It is the student's responsibility to notify the health care supervisor if they do not attend placement. If there are any issues or problems that are impacting on their ability to attend practice, they should seek assistance and contact the Clinical Teacher or Unit Coordinator.
- 4.6 If a student has a health condition that may impact on their ability to participate on a placement, they should raise this with their Clinical Teacher or Unit Coordinator.
- 4.7 Any student who is concerned about an activity or procedure that they are requested to undertake by an on-site supervisor is required to speak in confidence, to the Head of the appropriate School.

#### **5 Confidentiality**

- 5.1 The student must hold in strictest confidence any information gained from any source concerning the patient
- 5.2 It is a breach of confidentiality to discuss patient details outside the confines of the DHHS/FHS School or for any reason other than professional purposes. Highly

specialised services such as Correctional Health Services and Forensic Mental Health Services may have further specific requirements concerning confidentiality and safety.

- 5.3 It is absolutely forbidden for any student to pass on any information whatever concerning an individual patient to any person not directly involved in the patient's medical or pharmacy care.

6 **Communications with the Media and Members of the Public.**

- 6.1 Students are NOT authorised to speak to the media, either about individual patients or about more general issues of high media interest unless provided with authorisation from the relevant Manager/CEO/Director and University supervisor.
- 6.2 Any individual student who is concerned about any issue they believe to be of public interest is required to speak, in confidence, to the Head of the Appropriate School or the Associate Head, Student Affairs (School of Medicine) before committing to any course of action.
- 6.3 Further information concerning communicating with the media is contained in the
- Partners in Health Media Protocol
  - DHHS Media Protocols,
  - relevant Divisional and hospital policies
  - University of Tasmania Media Policy

DHHS Divisional policies may be accessed on the DHHS Intranet  
<http://intra.dhhs.tas.gov.au>.

Partners in Health Media Protocol can be accessed on:  
<http://www.healthsci.utas.edu.au/pih/publications.html>

University of Tasmania Media Policy can be located on:  
<http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/policies.html>

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Dated the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Nov 2005

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Additional Guidelines**

**for students on placement with:**

**the Correctional Health Service and/or Forensic Mental Health Service.**

#### **Safety Requirements**

- Students shall display their first name only on their Identification Badges.
- Students are forbidden to bring mobile telephones into the workplace.
- Students must provide a current police check and obtain security clearance prior to commencement of the placement. The Correctional Health Service requires the police check to be received at least 7 days prior to placement to ensure the relevant security clearances can be obtained.
- Students will obtain a Duress Alarm each day and wear the alarm at all times whilst in the workplace. Students will ensure they understand how and when to operate the alarm.
- Students will ensure they do not divulge any personal information whilst in the workplace. If unsure of what can be discussed students are to check with their supervisor.
- Students will have to comply with all security practices and procedures including biometric identification at the Wilfred Lopes Centre (Secure Mental Health Unit).

#### **Trafficking and associated behaviours**

- Students shall not have any pecuniary dealings with prisoners/detainees (i.e. at no time shall a student involve a prisoner/detainee in the buying, selling or trading of items, unless such buying, selling or trading occurs as part of authorised Prison Service operations, such as the canteen system).
- Students shall not provide or arrange to provide any substance, goods, messages or services to any prisoner/detainee, member of staff or other person within the prison, unless properly authorised to do so.
- Students shall not convey or arrange to convey any item or message from a prisoner/detainee, or from elsewhere in a prison, to any other party, unless properly authorised to do so.

#### **Conflicts of interest**

- Where a conflict or potential conflicts of interest with official duties (whether from financial interest, outside activities or personal relationships) arise, they should be immediately reported to your immediate supervisor. Any Manager/Supervisor receiving such information must act on the information immediately by making a verbal report to the State Manager, Correctional Health Service.
- If a person with whom a student has, or has had, a close relationship comes into custody, the student shall immediately notify their immediate Supervisor. Any relationship formed with a prisoner/detainee, beyond a proper and professional relationship, is considered to be a direct conflict of interest.

**Use of alcohol and other drugs**

- Students shall not smoke cigarettes or tobacco products in any of the Correctional Health Service or Prison Service buildings or vehicles, and shall comply with any relevant legislation or policy regarding the use of tobacco products.
- When within the prison environment students shall not take any drug or other substance that is not prescribed for their use.

Students shall be immediately sent from the workplace if it is believed he/she is intoxicated by alcohol or another substance and a full examination of the situation will occur.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Additional guidelines: for nursing students regarding dress**

Students from the Tasmanian School of Nursing and Midwifery are required to wear the TSNM uniform as described in the student manual except in particular settings where a uniform may not be required (eg mental health and some community nursing areas) as advised by your supervisor

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Additional guidelines: for medical students regarding examination of patients**

- 3.6 Students may only conduct intimate, invasive physical examinations under the direct supervision of an appropriate clinician and with the prior, informed consent of the patient according to the procedures of the clinical setting. This verbal consent should be noted in the patient's records as part of the examination notes.
- 3.7 Students must not conduct internal examinations of sedated or anaesthetised patients without the patient's prior written informed consent.
- 3.8 Students in the clinical years (years 3 and beyond) may conduct chest examinations of patients as part of the normal cardiovascular examination with the prior verbal consent of the patient.