

AHS COVID-19 Response - AHS Principles for Student Placements

Background

These principles are to provide guidance for Alberta Health Services (“AHS”) staff and leaders as well as post-secondary educational institution students, instructors, and faculty, applicable regulatory bodies, and government for seamless health care operations while supporting the continuation of student participation in placements in AHS facilities.

The Student Placements and COVID-19 Response Principles are based on, and intended to supplement and not replace, the AHS [Managing Students Involved in Placements during a Communicable Disease Outbreak, Epidemic, or Pandemic Guideline](#).

Principles

Safety

AHS’ top priority is the care and safety of patients, clients, and residents and will be critical to decisions related to student placements during the COVID-19 response.

Placements serve as learning mechanisms; student placements may proceed where appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and appropriate precautions are available and deployed.

The decision for a student placement is based on a determination of the safety of the student, AHS staff, and impact of care and safety of patients.

Health Education

Dealing with emergency and crisis situations is an integral part of health care education; therefore, whenever possible, students should not be excluded from participating within the health system during the COVID-19 communicable disease event.

Observership and job shadowing experiences are not recommended during a pandemic.

AHS recognizes that its partnerships with educational institutions and regulatory bodies are important and will collaborate with partners to attempt to make alternate arrangements for students in the case the COVID-19 event inhibits continuation of a placement. All reasonable efforts to accommodate placements will be made.

The decision about any given student placement is based on the ability to meet the student’s educational objectives and ability to achieve the learning outcomes which can be influenced by the:

- availability of AHS staff and/or educational institution’s instructors to offer appropriate supervision to students
- competency and ability of the student
- the extent to which services are disrupted on units/programs/zones by the COVID-19 response

AHS recognizes students who graduate build capacity in the workforce and therefore support placements where students are close to graduation, to enable graduation and entry into the workforce.

AHS will collaborate with partners to consider alternate settings and opportunities to meet the student’s placement requirements.

Once a decision is made to suspend a placement due to the COVID-19 response, students may be provided with opportunities for employment applicable to their competency and ability.