



Student Placements during COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions (as of August 18, 2020)

The Learner Placement Unit has received questions about how COVID-19 has affected the learning environment for students completing their clinical placements. These answers/guidelines are to provide guidance to educational institution students, faculty, instructors and staff while supporting student placements in the SHA. The Student Placements FAQ's are intended to supplement the SHA's Learner's Annex.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the shastudentplacements@saskhealthauthority.ca

Units Hosting Placements within SHA facilities – including Placements in Long Term Care

1. Can a unit who has COVID-19 + patients accept student placements?

Yes, provided there are **non-COVID-19** patients to care for.

2. What is the process of a placement if it needs to be interrupted because the unit only has COVID-19 + patients?

Step 1: The manager must end the placement, discuss with the Instructor if it is a group placement, and send the student home if it is a preceptored placement

Step 2: Manager to inform their Director

Step 3: Manager to email shastudentplacements@saskhealthauthority.ca

Step 4: Student and/or Instructor will inform their Clinical Placement Advisor

3. Will placements within long-term care (LTC) facilities continue to occur?

Yes, learners are still being accepted for placements in LTC however the student and instructors must be cohorted to that health care setting for the duration of their clinical placement.

This means, the student cannot work in other parts of the health system while they are cohorted to the LTC facility for the purpose of their placement. This also applies to integrated facilities where cohorting applies.

4. If a student is moving from an acute care placement to a long-term care based placement, do they need to self-isolate before starting the placement?

No. All students and staff are required to screen themselves daily upon entering all SHA facilities, including long-term care (LTC). The student should self-monitor for a minimum of 14 days when they start their placement in LTC, but they do not need to observe a waiting period before commencing.

Screening and Masking

1. What is the protocol for students and instructors entering an SHA facility?

All staff, students and anyone entering a building that is part of the SHA should be prepared to show their SHA issued photo identification or post-secondary education issued identification upon arrival for screening.

Anyone entering an SHA facility is required to complete an assessment and temperature check. If someone has symptoms, they have to contact 811 to arrange for a test. The individual must remain self-isolated until the test results come back.

If the results are negative, they must remain at home until they have had no symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, runny nose, sore throat or nasal congestion, etc.) for 48 hours¹

2. Are procedure masks available to students during their placement within an SHA facility?

Yes.

3. Are learners required to mask while in an SHA facility?

Effective April 15, staff, physicians, learners, trainees, vendors and contractors will be screened daily as they enter any SHA facility or program area to ensure they do not have any influenza like illness. As an added level of protection all staff, learners and physicians who work in patient/client/resident care areas or travel through those areas will be required to wear a mask at all times.²

4. Can students bring in their own non-medical mask (i.e. cloth) to wear in the non-clinical areas?

The use of personal non-medical masks (e.g. cloth) has not been approved at this time for use in our healthcare settings, but is currently being reviewed and further direction may be forthcoming.

5. If a clinical placement takes place in a private clinic, are masks available?

We recommend students contact their schools with their questions or concerns regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) availability in a non-SHA setting such as a private clinic.

How to Handle Break Times

1. What is the protocol for students changing into their scrubs/uniforms?

Students must come in their street clothes and change once in an SHA facility.

¹ This information is available of the Gov of Sask (COVID-19) section under the title "Health Care Worker Return to Work Assessment"

² More details on the Continuous Mask Use initiative, including principles, guidelines talking points and FAQ, can be found here:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/information-for-health-care-providers/ppe-infection-prevention-and-control#continuous-mask-use>

2. What can students take onto the unit?

Students are to have as few belongings as possible in the clinical area (i.e. a water bottle and pen), and any additional belongings must be approved by the site Manager or Nurse Supervisor. What is acceptable for students to have on SHA property is subject to change and varies depending on location, so program instructors are encouraged to ask Managers or Nurse Supervisors regularly about what students can bring with them to the clinical area. In addition, when taking breaks, students must follow social distancing/masking rules as indicated.

3. Can a student access an SHA cafeteria?

Yes. Students must comply with physical distancing rules while in SHA cafeterias and break rooms.

4. Can a student bring their own lunch?

Yes. The containers/bag must be wiped down upon entry into the facility.

5. Can a student bring a water bottle?

Yes. As long as it can be resealed. It must be wiped down upon entry into the facility.

6. Can food and beverages be delivered or brought into SHA facilities?

Food and beverages **can be delivered to or brought into SHA facilities** when the food, beverages, and other items are individually packaged in a container which can be wiped down with disinfectant wipes upon entry into the facility.

When food and beverages come into an SHA facility, the following guidelines apply:

- Do not share food with others. This includes pizza, chips, cakes, and potlucks.
- Make sure to wipe down take-out containers with a disinfectant wipe before bringing to a unit.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after handling the items.

7. Can students sit outside during lunch or breaks?

Yes.

8. Can the schools use a room on a unit for lunch, post conference etc.?

This varies based on the unit/ location. The answer to this question will have to come from the Manager of the specific area.

9. Will a student from another province have to self-isolate for 14 days prior to the placement starting in the SHA?

No. Like staff, students coming from another province will have to self-monitor. If showing symptoms, the student will have to self-isolate immediately and contact HealthLine 811 to inquire about testing.

10. Do out of country students have to self-isolate for 14 days prior to the placement starting?

Yes. Any students coming into Saskatchewan from out of country will require a self-isolation period of 14 complete days.

Students with COVID-19 exposure

1. What is a close contact?

There are several different ways someone can be considered a close contact of a patient with COVID-19. Close contact can include someone who:

- Provided care for someone with COVID-19 or who had other similar physical contact without appropriate personal protective equipment;
- Lived with or had prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with someone with COVID-19 (i.e. was coughed or sneezed on);
- Shared personal items, such as drinking cups or utensils with someone while they were symptomatic; and
- Was an airplane passenger seated within two metres of a symptomatic individual or crew member serving the symptomatic individual.

You would **NOT** be considered a close contact if you cared for someone with COVID-19 or had close physical contact, while using appropriate personal protective equipment, and the individual was self isolating.

You would **NOT** be considered a close contact if you lived with someone with COVID-19, but were not within two metres of that person and they were self isolating.

Transient interactions, such as walking by someone with COVID-19 or being briefly in the same room while maintaining physical distance, are not considered close contact.

People who meet the criteria of being a close contact should self-isolate for 14 days from the date of exposure³.

2. What are the directives for self-isolation while working in a COVID-19 worksite?

If a health care worker (which includes students) experiences a breach in personal protective equipment (PPE) usage, they will be considered a close contact and will have to self-isolate and self-monitor for 14 days after last exposure.

If a Health Care Worker using proper PPE works at a COVID-19 worksite, they are not considered to be a close contact. As such, they are required to self-monitor and use the screening tool as they continue to attend work/clinical.

³ This information is available at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/information-for-health-care-providers/general-information-for-all-health-care-providers>. The most up-to-date information on clinical guidance will always be first updated at the above website.