

Division of Health Sciences - Clinical Placement Policy

Date of Division Executive approval

30 April 2012.

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Cross References

[Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual](#), Section 4

Information paper: [Important Information for students in programs with Placement requirements.](#)

Background

This Policy provides Division of Health Sciences students and staff with information on the broad principles underpinning the administration of student Placement, and outlines important student responsibilities.

More detailed information for students about the context in which this Policy has been developed is available in the information paper titled [Important information for students in programs with clinical Placement requirements](#). Students are strongly encouraged to read both documents.

Definitions

‘Agreement or Deed’: the agreement between the University and the Placement Site, which details the responsibilities of both organisations in the Placement of students.

‘Administrative withdrawal (dropping) from a course’: an administrative process where the student’s enrolment in a course is cancelled by the University.

‘Census Date’: Refer to the [University’s Glossary of Terms](#)

‘Certificate of Currency’: a Certificate provided by the University’s insurer which details insurance cover in a category of insurance – eg, medical malpractice.

‘ClinEdSA’: a Health Workforce Australia funded organisation, hosted by SA Health, responsible to coordinate Placements for nominated health disciplines (currently nursing and midwifery but also allied health in future years) in collaboration with universities and other education providers.

‘Clinical Placement Unit’: the unit responsible for the administration of student Placements for the Division of Health Sciences.

‘Conditions of Placement’: broad understandings which the student accepts as part of their enrolment in a program requiring Placement.

‘Criminal History Clearance’: a report on the suitability of a person, from a criminal history point of view, to take part in certain activities or employment. There are several processes across Australia to achieve this, all involving a national check of criminal history. The Criminal History Clearance conducted through the SA Department of Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI), and referred to in this policy as a DCSI Screening Clearance, is the only Criminal History Clearance accepted by the University, SA Health venues and in many other South Australian health and education venues. The National Police Certificate (NPC), conducted through police departments, is the only Criminal History Clearance accepted for Placements interstate.

‘Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening Clearance’: as above, the only Criminal History Clearance process accepted by the University of South Australia, SA Health venues and other South Australian Placement venues for Placement in South Australia. In many health programs the DCSI Screening Clearance is a Program Rule.

‘National Police Certificate (NPC)’: the Criminal History Clearance conducted by State and Federal Police and the only Criminal History Clearance accepted by the University of South Australia and interstate venues for Placements outside of South Australia.

‘Placement(s)’: for the purposes of this policy this includes:

- The allocation of a student to a work site (organisation), including the University’s clinics and gyms, in order to practice specific clinical or other skills as part of an education program/course or as part of a project.
- Student participation in field trips, work experience or other activities involving the public, both internal and external to the University.

‘Placement Site’: the organisation/a specific area within that organisation, where students are placed as part of their program of study. This includes the University’s own clinics and gyms.

‘Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions’: requirements that must be met by the student prior to Placement and which are mandated by either the University and/or the Placement Site, such as DCSI Screening Clearance or NPC, immunisation, senior first aid/CPR. Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions are notified in the Student Placement System and, where they are a University requirement, also in program and course rules.

‘Program enrolment cancellation’: cancellation of a student’s enrolment in the program.

‘Program Rule’: Refer to the [University’s Glossary of Terms](#). Students in the program must comply with a Program Rule in order to remain enrolled in the program.

‘Special Circumstances’: defined circumstances where a student’s individual Placement needs in addition to those of a general academic nature will be considered prior to allocation of Placements.

‘Student Placement System’: the University’s software system for administration/allocation of student Placements. The Student Placement System is accessed through the Student Portal : myPlacement.

‘Study Plan’: a schedule of study for an individual student where courses that make up a program are scheduled in University study periods.

Policy

1. Placement negotiation

- a. Negotiation of Placements with Placement Sites is conducted by the Division of Health Sciences’ [Clinical Placement Unit](#) (CPU) and academic and other relevant school staff.
- b. **Students must not negotiate their own Placements** with a Placement Site unless doing so is a formal aspect of their program, notified in course information. **Students who disregard this will be considered to have engaged in a deliberate breach of policy and will be managed through the relevant Head of School.**
- c. The number and composition of Placements available at a Placement Site is based on the resources of the organisation, the objectives of the Placement and patient case mix and may vary from time to time.
- d. All communication that students have with a Placement Site, other than during rostered Placement hours, must be through the CPU or the student’s School/Clinical Coordinator, unless otherwise advised by the School.
- e. A legally ratified current Placement Agreement or Deed, signed by a person with the Vice Chancellor’s authorisation to sign such agreements, must be in place between the University and the Placement Site for all Placements. For ad-hoc Placements of small numbers of students for short periods, or as an interim measure, an [FS23 Placement Details form](#) may be used in place of an Agreement or Deed. An Agreement or FS23 must be in place for the University’s insurance cover to apply, and therefore no Placement should occur without one of these agreements in place.
- f. [Insurance related to student Placement](#) is established by the University with annual Certificates of Currency made available to the University by the insurer. The Certificate of Currency may be provided on request to the Placement Site and requests for these should be directed in the first instance to the Division Director: Services.

2. Conditions of Placement during Health Sciences programs

Accepting an offer into a program where Placement involving the public is a mandatory or optional part of that program, indicates the student accepts the Conditions of Placement.

2.1 Conditions of Placement related to criminal history clearance:

- a. A DCSI Screening Clearance is a Program Rule and a Pre Placement Compulsory Condition in all undergraduate and graduate entry programs leading to a health profession. These programs are listed at the end of this policy. The DCSI Screening

Clearance applies to all students in these programs, irrespective of the Australian state in which the student lives or studies from and the duration of the Placement. Clearance **must** be achieved within the designated time frame notified to the student. Students attending Placement in States other than South Australia will also require a National Police Certificate (NPC), met within the designated time frame.

- b. **Where a DCSI Screening Clearance is both a Program Rule and a Pre Placement Compulsory Condition, non-compliance can result in cancellation of the Placement course enrolment and program enrolment – see 4.**
- c. In all other programs where Placement is a mandatory or optional aspect of the program, a DCSI Screening Clearance, or an NPC if the Placement is interstate, is a Pre Placement Compulsory Condition, but not a Program Rule. Clearance **must** be achieved in the designated time frame notified to the student in order for the student to be eligible to take part in the Placement or activity.
- d. The University considers a DCSI Screening Clearance and an NPC to be current for three years from its date of notification, but some Placement Sites require a much shorter currency period. Students allocated to a Placement Site with a non-standard currency period must comply with that requirement in the designated timeframe.
- e. The DCSI Screening Clearance (and NPC if the Placement is interstate) must be current for the full duration of the Placement.

2.2 Other conditions of Placement:

- a. Students must comply with all specified University and Site-Specific Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions in the nominated time frame. **No extensions will be given.**
- b. Unless otherwise advised in the course outline or any other course documentation, Placements follow the work pattern of the relevant profession and may be rostered over 24 hours, 7 days a week (not public holidays) and full time.
- c. Students **must** plan ahead to ensure they are available for scheduled Placements as indicated in their Study Plan and/or prescribed program.
- d. **Placements will be in South Australia unless otherwise advised** and may be in rural areas. A mandatory rural Placement is required for some disciplines.
- e. Students on Placement are normally supernumerary to the Placement Site's staffing and will not be paid, either by the University or the Placement Site. In any situation where the student is paid by the Placement Site during Placement, the student will not be covered by University insurance.
- f. Unless otherwise advised, students are responsible for the cost of Placement travel and accommodation. Various scholarship schemes are available on the University's scholarships website -<http://www.unisa.edu.au/scholarship/>. Web links to other support, such as CentreLink and university departments of rural health, are available on the [CPU's website](#).
- g. The University is not responsible for any injury, loss or damage suffered or incurred as a result of participating in travel and accommodation arrangements made by the University or the student, and loss, injury or damage suffered or incurred as a result of taking part in a Placement.

- h. Students must attend Placement at the notified time and place and must follow allocated Placement rosters, where applicable. Where this is not possible for an urgent and unexpected reason beyond the student's control the student must notify their clinical supervisor.
- i. Students must comply with the rules, regulations and policies of the Placement Site and uphold the [University's Code of Conduct for Students](#) . As part of this, students must communicate in a respectful way about Placement matters including with staff of the Placement Site, academic and administrative staff of their School, and staff of the Clinical Placement Unit.

3. Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions

- a. Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions are outlined in, for example, program and course information/rules, pre Placement emails from the CPU, and Placement Site-specific information in the Student Placement System.
- b. Information about how to obtain a DCSI Criminal History Clearance (and an NPC if required) is available on the [CPU website](#).
- c. Non-compliance with the DCSI Criminal History Clearance (and NPC where applicable) in the specified timeframe will result in cancellation of the student's scheduled Placement and, in some programs – see 2.1(a) , 2.1(b) and 4(a) - may result in cancellation of program or course enrolment .
- d. Non-compliance with other Pre Placement Mandatory Conditions in the specified time frame (eg, medication calculation test in Nursing) may result in cancellation of Placement course enrolment and will result in cancellation of the scheduled Placement.
- e. Students are likely to be asked for evidence of having met the Pre Placement Conditions when they attend a Placement Site and may not be permitted to continue the Placement if that evidence cannot be provided on request.

4. Non-compliance with criminal history screening in the required time frame

- a. In programs where an DCSI Screening Clearance is a Program Rule and a Pre Placement Compulsory Condition (see list at the end of this Policy), non-compliance with clearance in the nominated timeframe will result in cancellation of the student's Placement course enrolment (where applicable) and will also initiate a process which is likely to result in cancellation of the student's program enrolment. Should cancellation of program enrolment be the outcome, the student can appeal the program enrolment cancellation to the Director: Student and Academic Services. The appeal must be received within 10 working days of receipt of notification of program enrolment cancellation. The decision of the Director: Student and Academic Services is final. Re-admission to the program is through SATAC and re-admission is not guaranteed.
- b. The Division Director: Services has the authority to approve course enrolment re-instatement. Course enrolment re-instatement requires that the following conditions are met:

- i. The DCSI Screening Clearance has been received no later than 4 weeks prior to the day Placement is due to commence.
 - ii. No other Pre Placement Compulsory Conditions are outstanding.
- c. Program enrolment re-instatement requires a successful appeal - see 4(a) - and approval by the Director: Student and Academic Services following consultation with the Head of School and Division Director: Services.
- d. In all other programs where a DCSI Screening Clearance is a Pre Placement Compulsory Condition, and the Placement is mandatory, non-compliance with clearance by the designated date will result in cancellation of the student's Placement.
- e. Where Placement is optional, the student may discuss the non-Placement options with their Course Coordinator.
- f. Students who are allocated an interstate Placement, but have not complied with the NPC requirement in the nominated timeframe, will not be eligible for the interstate Placement and will be allocated to South Australia – but only if a South Australian Placement is available after all other allocations are made.
- g. Students must not attend Placement, including in the University's clinics and gyms, without a DCSI Screening Clearance (and NPC clearance in the case of interstate Placements).
- h. If Criminal History Screening does not clear the student, the University may negotiate options with the student on a case by case basis.

5. Placement Allocation

- a. Students are provided with information, in most cases via the Student Placement System, regarding the available Placement Site opportunities for a specific Placement.
- b. The suitability of each Placement, in terms of meeting the objectives of the Placement course, is decided by academic staff.
- c. Allocation of students to Placement Sites is conducted by the Clinical Placement Unit in collaboration with academic staff.
- d. Students must be enrolled in the Placement course at least 12 weeks before Placement begins in order to receive equal consideration in the allocation of Placement sites.
- e. Students eligible for Special Consideration in Placement allocation (refer clause 5 (i) for eligibility) must submit their request (using the [Special Consideration Pre Allocation](#) form available on the CPU website) at least 12 weeks before Placement, unless otherwise notified. Requests provided later than this will be accepted for consideration but a late application may jeopardise the University's capacity to allocate a suitable Placement.
- f. The University's Student Placement System is the main allocation mechanism, randomly allocating Placements according to in-built rules and, where preferences are submitted, student preferences. Whether Placement preferences may be submitted and the number of preferences that can be submitted is an academic

decision. Achieving a submitted preference is not guaranteed in the allocation process.

- g. Academic staff approve the Placement allocation for each student prior to allocation notification to students.
- h. Subject to clauses 5(i) and 6(b) students are required to accept and abide by the Placement allocation decision.
- i. Special Consideration for Placement allocation will be given only in the following circumstances:
 - 1. Students with a disability access plan.
 - 2. Students who are the registered carer for a sick or disabled dependent child or relative, with the relevant documented evidence.
 - 3. Students with a major health problem requiring frequent and specialised treatment which is only available at certain locations, with the relevant documented evidence.
 - 4. Other highly extenuating medical, compassionate or special circumstances such as those outlined in clause 7 of the [Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual](#).
- j. Circumstances which are a normal part of life will not be considered when making allocation decisions. Such circumstances include:
 - 1. Travel, transportation and accommodation requirements, except where issues are relevant to clause 5(i) or 6(b).
 - 2. Student work or other business commitments.
 - 3. Being a parent, except in the circumstances outlined in 5 (i)2 and 6 (b).
 - 4. Weddings and other celebratory events.
 - 5. Extra -curricular activities such as clubs.
 - 6. Requests to be re-allocated to Placement sites previously allocated but not attended or where the student withdrew from the Placement.
- k. Students who are not eligible for Special Consideration as outlined in clause 5(i) or who do not meet the eligibility for consideration of a Request for Variation outlined in clause 6(b) but who cannot attend Placement because of other commitments are required to withdraw from the Placement course as soon as possible after the Placement allocation is notified and contact their Program Director to discuss a change to their Study Plan.
- l. Students who do not formally withdraw or notify their Program Director, but who then do not attend an allocated Placement, will not be permitted to submit preferences for any future Placement in subsequent enrolment in that course, and will be allocated to a Placement only after all other student allocations have been made. Depending on the circumstances, non- attendance at Placement may result in a Fail grade.

6. Requests for Variation to Placement Allocation

- a. Students must read clauses 5(i), 5(j), and 6(b), (c), and (d) before requesting a variation to Placement allocation.

- b. Urgent and exceptional reasons for requesting a variation to Placement allocation include highly extenuating medical, compassionate or special circumstances which are outside of the control of the student and where there was no opportunity for advanced preparation or notification. Please see clauses in section 7 of the the [Assessment Policies and Procedures Manual](#). for descriptions of these types of circumstances.
- c. Students wishing to request a variation to their Placement allocation must complete a [Post Allocation Request for Variation to Placement form](#), available on [the Clinical Placement Unit's website](#) and submit this to the CPU within 5 working days of Placement allocation.
- d. If the Request for Variation to Placement is accepted and an alternative Placement is available it will be offered to the student. If no alternative is available, or the student does not accept the offered alternative, the student must immediately formally withdraw from the course and negotiate a change of Study Plan with the Program Director.

7. Withdrawing From a Clinical Placement Course

- a. The right to withdraw from a course (ie 'drop' a course) before Census Date without penalty or fee exists for Placement courses as it does for other courses.
- b. Students wishing to withdraw from a Placement course should consider the implications of doing so, for example on the duration of their study to complete the program.
- c. Students deciding to withdraw must formally do so through Campus Central so that their Placement allocation can be made available to another student, and are required to do so as early as possible before the course and Placement is due to begin - preferably within 5 working days following Placement Site allocation but no later than 4 weeks before Placement commences.
- d. Irrespective of the right to withdraw from the course, students who withdraw more than once from the same Placement course, other than for demonstrated (documented) Special Consideration circumstance listed in clause 5(i) or documented highly extenuating medical, compassionate or other special circumstance referred to in clause 6(b), will be allocated after all other student Placement allocations.

Programs where a DCSI Screening Clearance is a Program Rule

Australian Registered Nurse Training Program (ARNTP)	Bachelor of Podiatry (IBOP)
Bachelor of Laboratory Medicine (IBBL)	Bachelor of Pharmacy (IBPH)
Bachelor of Midwifery (IBMW)	Bachelor of Physiotherapy (IBPZ)
Bachelor of Nursing (IBNU and WBNU)	Master of Physiotherapy (Graduate Entry) (IMPE)
Bachelor of AppSci (Occupational Therapy) (IBOC)	Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science (IBRS)
Master of Occupational Therapy (Graduate Entry) (IMOG)	Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing (IGMG)