



# Professional Practice Experience Handbook

2022 Midwifery Student



## **Welcome to Clinical Placement at the University of Southern Queensland**

Clinical placement is about integrating what you have learnt in theory and putting it into practice in the real world of health care. This is an exciting time and also one that can cause stress to students. To make sure you are well prepared this handbook provides information about the minimum standards that students are required to meet to be successful in their clinical placement.

To meet the registration requirements of the approved program curriculum, Midwifery students need to successfully complete **1240 hours within the 8 midwifery practice courses** offered in their program.

All students enrolled in the Bachelor of Midwifery (BMID) degree are registered with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority (AHPRA). This provides some very clear legislative requirements for students regarding their conduct, practice and fitness. This Handbook outlines the expected conduct for all students while on their placement. It is within the right of the University and the Health Facility to stop a placement if these guidelines are not followed.

### **What Students *must* know about Clinical Placement**

- ☆ The **Midwifery Ultra Megasite (MUM)** is where you will find all the forms, links and information you require to prepare for your clinical placements. They can be found with your other study desks on **UConnect** under **ULearn**. It is important that you use these sites to support your success.
- ☆ Registered Midwives and Midwifery Students are governed by **national legislation**, the **Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009**
- ☆ USQ has written agreements with specific Health Care Facilities to provide placements
- ☆ Mandatory documents **MUST** be completed and submitted via InPlace prior to commencement of the placement course
- ☆ Placements are allocated based on available places, student enrolment, mandatory document submission, student requests, and post code match where possible
- ☆ Placements only take place within Australia or countries where USQ has agreements in place
- ☆ Important placement information will be communicated to you via **email, InPlace or the MUM** sites
- ☆ Students may be required to travel a significant distance from their home to attend their allocated placement
- ☆ Students must keep a copy of all of their assessment documents, timesheets and makeup requirements throughout their placements

**Signing the Student Declaration at the end of this handbook as part of your mandatory documents, indicates that you have read, understood and agree to act within the guidelines provided in the handbook**

## The Professional Experience Placements Team (PEPT)

The Professional Experience Placements Team consists of Clinical Placement Officers and Professional Experience staff in Toowoomba and Ipswich. This team allocates the clinical placements and can help you with any questions or problems about preparing for and attending a clinical placement.

The PEPT are based in Toowoomba and Ipswich. You can contact staff via phone or email. External students, please contact the Toowoomba campus.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS OFFICES:

#### Contacts

Email: [clinical@usq.edu.au](mailto:clinical@usq.edu.au)

Phone: 07 4631 2974

## The Academic Team

The Academic Team consists of the Clinical Course Examiners, Supervisors, Facilitators and the Clinical Education Lead. Your course examiners contact details will be included in the course Clinical Guides.

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***In case of after-hours emergency, phone 1300 99 82 36***

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## STUDENT REGISTRATION OBLIGATIONS

Registered Midwives and Midwifery Students are governed by national legislation, the **Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009**. The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Board under this national law is to protect the public. The National Law stipulates what is required of the University, and of the student, to ensure compliance for all students attending clinical placements. This obligation means *students must be fit to practice and must act within the guidelines of the National Law Act 2009 while on practice/clinical placements*.

Section 90 of the National Law stipulates the registration of students. All students of midwifery must be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) in their first semester of study. At USQ this occurs after the Census Date. Students' registration expires at 'the end of the day on which the student completes, or otherwise ceases to be enrolled in, the approved program of study' (Section 90. P 126. Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act, 2009).

To comply with the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, there are requirements that **MUST** be met by the University and by each student to ensure the safety of women their families and legislative compliance.

**An education provider is required under the National Law to notify AHPRA if they reasonably believe:**

- *a student enrolled in a program of study provided by the education provider has an impairment that, in the course of the student undertaking clinical training as part of the program of study, may place the public at substantial risk of harm; or*
- *a student for whom an education provider has arranged clinical training has an impairment that, in the course of the student undertaking clinical training, may place the public at substantial risk of harm.*

Information provided from Section 143 National Legislation 2009.

**Students have an obligation under the National Law to notify AHPRA within seven days if:**

- *They have been charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more; or*
- *They have been convicted of, or are the subject of, a finding of guilt for an offence punishable by imprisonment; or*
- *Their registration under the law of another country that provides for the registration of students has been suspended or cancelled.*

## SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The **scope of practice** for students of midwifery is governed by NNBA supervision of Midwives (2019) and the ACM scope of practice for midwives (2016). The scope of a student's practice is influenced by:

- Their progress within the midwifery degree
- The health care needs of the clinical learning environment
- The level of acuity of the woman and her family in the health care setting

As a student of midwifery, your scope of practice will change throughout the course of your degree. The course examiner for the practice/clinical course in which you are enrolled will provide the guidelines for your current scope of practice.

You may not be able to work to the full capacity of a registered nurse while practicing as a student midwife. Some students who may secure contracted work as an RN in a maternity unit need to be aware that they will work to a different scope during their RN shifts to that during their student midwife clinical practice shifts. All shifts worked as a midwifery student must be conducted under the supervision of a registered midwife and adhere to hospital policies, particularly in relation to drug administration. Students must ensure they familiarise and work within all policies and procedures of their clinical practice site.

It is up to you to make sure that you understand and work within these guidelines when on placement. Students who practice outside of their current scope of practice may receive a **fail grade**.

Reading and becoming familiar with the below Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) documents will ensure you are following professional and ethical guidelines in practice. These can be obtained via the links below or via the links on your placements study desk.

### Midwifery Students

Code of Conduct for Midwives (2018)

<https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-statements/professional-standards.aspx>

Midwifery Practice Standards (2018)

<https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards/Midwife-standards-for-practice.aspx>

International Code of Ethics (2018)

<https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/news/2018-03-01-new-codes-of-ethics-in-effect.aspx>

## SOCIAL MEDIA

You are advised to read the AHPRA Social Media Guideline (2019)

<https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines/Social-media-guidance.aspx>

**SOCIAL MEDIA: As a student you are not to post any information/images about your clinical placement, women or their families, the facility, your fellow students or anything else related on any social media forum. You may be dismissed from placement if anything posted contravenes any of the laws or codes that apply.**



## How could this information affect my clinical placements?

1. **Complying with legislation:** The 'Student Declaration' is the last page of this handbook. You are required to sign and submit this prior to undertaking placement. By signing this document, you are informing USQ and the health facility that you fulfill all the conditions and do not have any of the limitations discussed in this handbook or in any of the legislation or codes that have been discussed. It is **YOUR** responsibility to make sure that this is correct.
2. **Fitness for clinical placement:** Sometimes your situation or health could change over the course of your studies. This can impact on whether or not you are still able to meet the conditions. If your situation does change, please notify either your Course Examiner or the PEPT to discuss whether or not you are 'fit for placement'. Most of the time you will be asked to obtain a medical clearance from your doctor that says you are fit to go on placement.
3. **Safety for Placement:** You must provide evidence of your current AHPRA registration and an Australian Federal Police Check prior to undertaking placement. If you have a charge against you, it will be raised with the Clinical Education Lead in the first instance. If something happens which could result in your AHPRA registration or Police Certificate being cancelled (e.g. a criminal charge), you need to inform AHPRA within seven days. You also need to let USQ know that you are no longer able to go on placement.
4. **Pregnancy:** If you become pregnant during the course of your study, you will not be able to do placement 6 weeks either side of your estimated due date. You will need to provide the PEPT with a letter from your doctor including your estimated due date and advice on your fitness to do placement. If you are planning a pregnancy, you will need to have your required immunisations before you become pregnant. If you have not been immunised or don't have immunity and you are already pregnant, you may not be able to have some of these or may have to wait until further into your pregnancy. Please get in touch with the PEPT to discuss these and make a plan that may allow you to still do your placement.



**Your health and wellbeing is important to us at USQ. We want to assist you in meeting the clinical needs of your course. To do this, we need to hear from you when a health condition/disability, mental health related issue or other situation occurs that may affect your placements.**



## PREPARING FOR PRACTICE PLACEMENTS

### For students to be eligible for placement they must:

- Pass the pre-requisite requirements for the placement course/s
- Enrol in the practice course
- Submit/update all mandatory documents within timeframes
- Be allocated a placement
- Prepare for orientation and any facility specific requirements

**Pre-requisite courses/requirements and enrolment:** It is important that you always check the pre-requisite course/requirements for each and every course you enrol in. Contact Student Support or your Student Relationship Officer (SRO) if you have questions about your course progression, prerequisites for practice placement courses or if you are having trouble enrolling in your courses. You can email them on [usq.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:usq.support@usq.edu.au)

If you happen to *fail a pre-requisite* course for a clinical course in which you are already enrolled in, you will be removed from the clinical course *according to USQ Pre-Requisite procedure*. If you are already undertaking placement, you will be asked to leave your placement. This does not apply to incomplete grades for pre-requisite courses. Any completed hours in this situation, *will not* be counted towards your overall clinical hour requirements.

**Placement allocations:** The important date document available on your MUM site provides you with the dates when placement allocations will be released for each semester.

*The PEPT attempts to place students locally (within 1 hour) of where they live, however this may not always be possible. Please make sure you keep your address is correct on InPlace so placement allocation is based on current information*

**‘Mandatory Documents’:** These are documents that USQ is required to collect from each student and monitor for the health facilities. They **MUST** be provided and updated by you as required, to enable you to go on placement. There is a checklist of mandatory documents on page 12. Further information and links to obtain the required documents are on the MUM site.

**IMPORTANT:** All of your mandatory documents must be submitted on InPlace before attending your first residential school in February prior to the start of Semester 1

**Placement Release:** The important date document available on the MUM site provides you with the dates when placements will be released for the upcoming semester. Your placement will not be released if any of your mandatory documents will expire **before or during the placement that has been allocated to you**. It's your responsibility to check the dates on InPlace for all documents that have expiry dates and make sure they will remain current for the semester you are enrolled in a placement course.

**Orientation Information:** Any facility specific orientation and preparation information will be posted to InPlace **two weeks** prior to your placement commencing. You need to check this and be aware of any extra requirements that you might need to provide, as well as whether or not you need to contact the facility prior to placement, when you will find out about your roster and when your orientation will take place.

## Timeline for preparing for placements

### First Year Priorities

1. **Start organising** your mandatory documents as soon as you accept your offer

2. **Commence submitting** your documents on InPlace when you enrol in the Midwifery courses for Semester 1

3. **Finalise** mandatory documents before you commence residential school on the first day of Semester 1

### Priorities for all future semesters

Ensure you update all of your mandatory documents before each semester commences, so they are current for all of your placements during the upcoming semester

**If you are unsure or have questions, contact the PEPT early so they can help you!**

The PEPT provide a list of **'important dates'** each year on the [MUM](#) site. Amongst other things, it tells you:

- When mandatory documents must be updated for each semester
- When placement allocations will be released on InPlace for you to view

***Please remember that your practice placements will start at the beginning of your first semester of study so you must be prepared!***

## INPLACE

InPlace is the cloud-based placement system used by USQ to manage practice placements. Once you enroll in a subject for your course, your personal InPlace file is automatically created within 24 hours. You can then log in using your USQ log in and password to access [InPlace](#).

- **Upload all mandatory documents to InPlace**
- Upload Clinical Bursary applications
- Placement allocation information and orientation information will be found here

**There are instructions and a short video with directions for using InPlace on the [MUM](#) site**

*Start uploading your mandatory documents to InPlace as soon as you get them – they don't all have to be uploaded at once. This shows the PEPT that you are working on being ready for placement!*

Some **InPlace** tips –

- When each document is uploaded, InPlace will send the PEPT a message to 'verify' and check it is correct – it might take a few days for these to be verified
- If your document is rejected there will be a message explaining why
- Check the expiry dates on the details page of your InPlace file regularly to keep your documents current for all your placements across all semesters of study
- InPlace works best with **Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox**



## CHECKLIST OF MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

### General Mandatory Document

#### 2022 USQ Student Declaration

- Clinical Handbook is updated at start of Semester 1 each year – review annually and sign the declaration found on the last page of the Handbook

✦ **Upload: Signed and witnessed Signature page at the start of each year**

#### Working with Children Card/Blue Card

- QLD applications must be submitted electronically via the Blue Card website
- If you have a pre-existing Blue Card, we will link you to USQ once you upload a copy of the card to InPlace.

✦ **Upload: Copy of WWC card OR QLD Students ONLY can provide relevant APHRA registration instead**

#### Australian Police Certificate

- There is a list on the NUR:PPHub with [ACIC approved providers](#) – make sure you use one of these

✦ **Upload: Copy of certificate**

#### CPR Certificate

- Must be yearly Australian nationally accredited face to face training course (can take 2-3 weeks)

✦ **Upload: Copy of certificate**

#### COVID-19 Infection Control Training

- Complete and submit prior to your first placement

✦ **Upload: Copy of completion certificate**

### Mask Fit Testing

#### Mask Fit Testing

- Provide evidence of outcome of fit testing for 2 masks from either a placement facility, USQ or external provider

✦ Document showing date of fit test, mask fit test results and fit factor rating for two masks

### Immunisation Requirements

#### Vaccine Preventable Disease Form (VPD)

- Required to be completed by a Health Practitioner and include Hepatitis B, Measles Mumps and Rubella, Varicella and Pertussis evidence – can take 4 to 6 months to complete Hep B

✦ **Upload: completed 5 page document**

#### Influenza

- Must be obtained at the **start** of Flu Season each year (April) and be for the flu season for that year
- You are required to provide evidence in April/May each year

✦ **Upload: Dated evidence of being injected with vaccine from provider**

#### COVID-19 Vaccination Evidence

✦ **Upload: COVID-19 Digital Vaccination Certificate**

### Queensland Health Requirements

#### QHealth Student Checklist

#### QHealth Student Deed Poll

- Submit evidence only once
- Not required from GUC students

✦ **Upload: Student Orientation Checklist (2 pages) – all boxes ticked**

✦ **Upload: Deed Poll (Signature page only)**

#### QHealth iLearn Modules

- See page 5 for further details to create an iLearn account
- Not required from Tasmanian Students

**Upload: Copy of each certificate**

#### COVID-19 Student Placement Declaration

- Complete and submit declaration prior to each placement

✦ **Upload: Copy of declaration once enrolled in each placement**

### Placements in Tasmania and other States/Territories

If you are undertaking a placement in Tasmania or another state or territory, **your placement site may require you to complete site specific orientation and/or workplace health and safety certification** for them. Please check the [MUM](#) site.

## Clinical Department

Midwifery is a highly respected profession and it is expected that you will present yourself in a professional manner. The only jewellery permitted is a wedding band. A fob watch pinned to your uniform is preferred and, in some agencies, required, due to possible injury to women and babies from wrist watches. You must wear your student identification so that it is visible on your uniform. You must ensure that your name and photo are clearly visible and that there is nothing else on the card.

You are not permitted to wear clothing, including underclothing past your elbows while working directly with women and babies. You are not permitted to wear jumpers or cardigans while working directly with women and babies. In cooler months, please ensure you wear a black or navy jumper or jacket to and from the facility.

The rules of basic hygiene should be maintained at all times. Long and/or painted fingernails or acrylic nails are not permitted and may cause an injury to a woman and her baby. It is essential that you maintain a high standard of personal grooming in order to demonstrate to women and their families and other health professionals that you take personal pride in your appearance.

## Clinical Uniform and Equipment

Uniforms and equipment must be obtained prior to undertaking a clinical course. The USQ clinical shirt and optional jacket, and belt bag are available from [School Locker](#).

Uniforms can also be viewed and purchased through the Post Office on campus in Toowoomba or the cafés at either Springfield or Ipswich campus.

Remaining items can be purchased from any retail store.

The **full clinical uniform** that complies with current Workplace Health and Safety regulations is as follows:

- **Pants:** Comfortable fitting dark navy blue or black slacks, cargo pants or culottes (No hipster, leggings or jeans)
- **Shirt:** USQ clinical shirts for midwifery are purple. Clinical shirts are available from the USQ Bookshops.
- **Shoes:** Black or navy-blue lace up, strap or slip-on fully enclosed supportive shoes with a non-slip sole for both genders (**NO** joggers or sandals)
- Hijabs or headscarves must be Navy Blue or Black in colour
- Black or white sport socks or walk socks
- Optional – USQ jacket for winter

## Mask Fit Testing

Currently, all students, regardless of their placement site, are required to be fit tested for two masks before commencing placement. Whilst on placement shifts, or at COCE appointments, students must ensure that they wear the N95 mask to which they are fitted. If students can't access fit testing through current places of employment, USQ can provide fit testing at Toowoomba and Ipswich campuses. Appointments can be made via link <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/UniversityofSouthernQueensland6@USQPRD.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

Alternatively, students can have this done externally in a private setting, although this may incur a small cost.

## MIDWIFERY PLACEMENTS

Most hospitals offer integrated placements for midwifery. On occasion however, a block placement may be organised, and this is more usual for a rural experience. On occasion, students living in very rural QLD areas may approach a placement site close to where they live to discuss the possibility of undertaking their midwifery clinical placement. In these circumstances, the student must contact the PEPT to discuss and finalise this.

### Integrated Placements

- Integrated placements will require attendance on two (2) or three (3) consecutive days a week for the specified shifts for each midwifery practice experience topic
- An integrated placement for midwifery students will be an option at some facilities

### Block Placements

- A Block Placement takes place 5 days a week to complete the required hours for each placement

### Queensland Placements

- All clinical placements in first and second year are unpaid.

### Tasmanian Placements

Midwifery placement in Tasmania is combination of paid and unpaid placement and this only available to students who reside in Tasmania.

- **First Year:** unpaid integrated placement which requires attendance on five (5) days per fortnight
- **Second Year:** the student is required to apply directly to their placement site for a paid placement for the second year of their program. Once this paid placement is confirmed, you must advise the PEPT in writing (including a copy of the letter of offer)



Please consider your work, life, and family balance when enrolling in placement courses. You must be sure you can meet and attend the minimum requirements of clinical hours per fortnight to complete your clinical placement within allocated timeframes.



## Continuity of Care Experiences (COCE)

Continuity of care experiences are one group of experiences that students undertake within their allocated clinical hours for a given course. The total number of clinical hours for a clinical course is normally 155 hours, averaging to 20 shifts for most courses. This equates to a .5 FTE commitment during semester one and two timeframes. If a student is following a woman's pregnancy journey for the purposes of gaining a COCE, this experience should occur during timeframes when the student is attending his/her allocated booked shifts at his/her clinical placement/host hospital site. Attending clinical placement outside of these times is discouraged to avoid becoming over tired and stressed.

*The COCE experience is not a substitute for attending hospital care experiences- i.e. attending clinical shifts at a service site. Therefore, students cannot substitute large volumes of hours e.g. 100, 200, or more by only attending COCEs. Students are required to gain balanced exposure to maternity care service provision to ensure the full range of care experiences are gained.*

### Attending clinical placement outside of rostered shifts

For the purposes of workplace health and safety and insurance liability, students must not attend un-booked clinical placement hours outside of booked or rostered shifts/hours for example outside of semester 1 and 2. Students are encouraged to keep these types of visits to a minimum however, if this does become necessary the student must advise her/his course examiner and PEPT to ensure insurance cover

Due to the nature of the COC experience and the professional relationship that midwives form with women, it is acknowledged that there may be times when a student may choose to attend their host hospital during his/her "off duty" time to be with COC woman. Examples of times that are permitted and reasonable to attend a COCE woman outside of a rostered shift are as follows:

- The woman attends the hospital for an additional unscheduled assessment and calls the student;
- Scheduled antenatal appointments at the host hospital or off site at a related service site for example a GP appointment or MGP clinic;
- Childbirth classes;
- The woman goes into labour and is having her baby
- Students may simply not have been able to attend a scheduled antenatal appointment due to other commitments or may choose to attend more than the required x 4 antenatal visits to gain a more comprehensive experience.

*Students must not pressure or coerce women to schedule their care around the student's needs. The student is a guest who is following the women as and when able.*

In all these scenarios, the student should have organised any unscheduled visits with the woman and her supervising midwife/health practitioner. Meetings with the woman should occur during scheduled care experiences (check-ups, pathology, radiology, education) therefore; the student is accompanying the woman as she sees registered health professionals. Students should not be seeing women for social catchups. If it becomes necessary for the student to attend a woman's appointment outside of the student's booked clinical placement shift, the time spent providing direct care can be 'counted' to the overall clinical placement hours.

Examples of scenarios when students may count time spent with a COCE woman outside of booked hours/shift.

- *The student is working a paid shift in another area of the hospital and is called to her COCE women to provide care and hopefully assist the women to birth her baby.*

In this scenario, it is the students responsibly to negotiate with their manager to be released to attend their COCE women. Only the time spent providing direct care under the supervision of the midwife can be “counted” and contributing to the overall 155 hours for clinical placement.

- *The student is completing a clinical placement shift on a post-natal floor and her COCE woman comes in for an antenatal appointment, unscheduled antenatal assessment or care during labour.*

In this scenario, the student should negotiate with his/her preceptor for the shift to be excused from the allocated area. The student then attends their COCE woman. The time spent providing direct patient care to the COCE woman in this type of scenario is part of the normal shift time and does not need any adjustments.

- *The student has worked a full shift and birth is imminent for their COC woman. The student wishes to stay with the woman to support her and “catch” the birth.*

In this scenario, the student needs to be mindful of Workplace Health and Safety regulations to ensure she takes the recommended breaks. Please refer to the USQ Professional Practice Placement Handbook for more information on the WHS policy.



## Applications for extension of time to complete COCEs

If a student has not completed the requirements of the COCE by the end of the semester, they should:

- Communicate with their 'Course Examiner' for the given course to discuss the circumstances
- Submit an 'Extension for time application' to the course examiner specifying on the application form they are applying for both:
  - Additional clinical placement hours
  - Extension of time for submission of assessment items related to that course

The course examiner upon receipt of this application will communicate with the PEPT to check if additional time (and thus insurance cover) can be organised with the service site where the student is attending clinical placement. Due to the nature of how clinical placement is managed by individual service sites, there is no guarantee this can be arranged. The student must not attend COCEs outside of booked clinical placement hours unless an extension of time has been approved. Only COCE associated with course requirements can be considered for extensions of time.

***Students need to be enrolled in a clinical course to commence clinical placement and to attend a COCE women.***

Examples of scenarios when student should not be counting time for clinical placement hours:

- Time spent travelling to and from the hospital to attend COCE women.
- Time spent waiting for appointments
- Phone calls, texting or emailing COC women
- Social encounters – accidental meeting at the supermarket,

Students need to be either observing or providing direct clinical care under the supervision of a midwife or registered health professional for time spent with a COC woman to be counted

***All time spent with a COC women needs to be documented and signed for by the supervising midwife or registered health professional who is responsible for the women on the 'verification of visits' form. Visits that are not signed for will not be counted.***

## AFTER YOUR PLACEMENT IS ALLOCATED

### Accommodation

Whenever possible students are placed locally to where they live. If this is not possible or if you have a rural placement, please contact the Placement Team to find out whether or not accommodation is available at the site where you are placed.

### Clinical Bursary Application

Bursaries are offered to assist USQ **midwifery** students who are undertaking their placement in **rural or remote areas away from where they usually reside**. They are also offered to assist **regional students to attend placement in a large metropolitan hospital**.

The bursaries are offered each semester and if you are eligible, you can apply for them after placement release for each semester. The applications are considered by a committee who will apply eligibility criteria and choose the successful students. Not everyone who applies will receive a bursary.

For more details on the bursary and eligibility criteria, please go to the 'Clinical Placement Bursary Information and Application Form' on the [MUM](#) site. The dates for applying are included on the 'Important Dates' documents and will also be promoted on these Study Desk sites or via email.

**For more information go to the [MUM](#) site**

## FITNESS FOR PRACTICE PLACEMENT

**If you have a health impairment or a criminal charge listed against you on your National Police Check, you may not be considered 'Fit for Clinical Placement'**

An 'impairment' is defined under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as a

- physical or mental impairment,
- disability,
- condition or disorder (including substance abuse or dependence),

that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect capacity to safely practice the profession or a student's capacity to undertake clinical training. National Boards may place conditions on your registration to ensure that you are able to practice safely if you fall in this category.

***If you do have an impairment you should check with AHPRA to ensure they will register you on completion of your course.***

When you complete your application for admission to the program, you will be asked to inform USQ if you have:

- An impairment that is likely to affect your capacity to practice the profession or do practice/clinical placement
- Any criminal history that you may have in Australia and/or overseas

**Declaring impairments or criminal history does not always mean that you cannot be admitted to the program.**

*The university will decide whether the impairment or criminal history is relevant to your ability to do placement.*

If you have a health/disability issue that could impair your ability to do a placement

- ask your doctors opinion and ask for a medical clearance certificate *which states that you are able to fully take part in all the required activities and have the skills and communication ability to meet the objectives of the course*
- give your certificate to the PEPT or discuss this with your Examiner
- the Program Coordinator will be asked to review your information and provide feedback
- you will then be informed of the outcome

**Any information you provide will be treated with discretion and in line with the privacy policy of the University.**

## ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICE PLACEMENTS

It is expected that you will attend **100%** of your clinical placement at the time and shift allocated by the clinical facility. This is a requirement of the course specifications for a clinical course. If you do not comply with the roster and roster guidelines set for you by the facility, you may be asked to leave your placement. This could result in an unsatisfactory grade.

**Your clinical placement takes priority over other work commitments. Once a clinical placement shift has been accepted by the student, the expectation is that you will not change this and will attend. Swapping, cancelling or changing shifts is strongly discouraged.**

Please give your employer plenty of notice, so work does not impact on your ability to attend your clinical shifts. You will receive orientation information on InPlace two weeks prior to your placement commencing.

**Midwifery involves shift work** - your clinical placements will also include shift work including morning, afternoon and night shifts. You may also be required to do placement shifts on public holidays.

All aspects of the placement apart from organising the placements, is **YOUR** responsibility. This includes:

- arranging child-minding;
- organising transport to and from the placement
- paying for any costs associated with parking, travel and accommodation
- rearranging private work commitments
- bringing your clinical guide/workbook/portfolio documents to the practice/clinical placement each day

**Please consider these when enrolling each semester to ensure you can meet expectations.**

**Where a student's practice placement is incomplete because the student has not completed the hours required, make up hours will always be necessary. Please note these make up hours may not be at a convenient time to the student.**

**Requesting a rostered shift change** - While this is strongly discouraged, you may request a shift change from your rostered shift while on placement, you can approach your clinical supervisor/NUM to request the change.

**Requesting a rostered shift:** In some instances, the facility may request you change a shift or your roster. The reasons may be due to Workplace Health and Safety and/staff skill mix requirements. If a staff member requests you to change a shift, you are **obligated to comply** with the request.

**Getting the most out of your clinical** - You are responsible for making the most out of the learning opportunities available while undertaking your clinical placement.

- Introduce yourself to the staff within the area you will be working;
- Come prepared with learning objectives;
- Be engaged in all clinical activities;
- Be punctual and dressed appropriately;
- Seek feedback for each shift;
- Take time with your placement supervisor to clearly communicate your placement goals, personal strengths and expectations;
- Attend clinical placement for the full number of hours allocated to the course



## Absence while on Practice Placement

### **Absences are only accepted due to illness or extenuating personal circumstances.**

You must inform the facility and relevant staff members of any absence from placement. If you are absent for two or more days during a practice placement you must inform the USQ Placements Office.

If a student is absent from placement for two days or more, a medical certificate or statutory declaration (whichever is appropriate) must be provided to the Placements Office, **within 10 working days of the absence**.

Except in extenuating circumstances (and at the discretion of the course examiner), failure to meet the above conditions will result in the award of a **Fail-Not Participate grade**.

All days/hours missed will need to be made up. We strongly recommend that you make up one or two missed days with extra shifts while on your placement (these can usually be arranged with the Nurse Unit Manager/Midwifery educator).

You may be out on placement during semester breaks and/or may be out on placement during the exam period. If you have an exam timetabled during a clinical placement, you can make arrangements with the NUM to have that day off, however, this day must be made up.

**You are not permitted to take days off to study or to complete assignment work.**

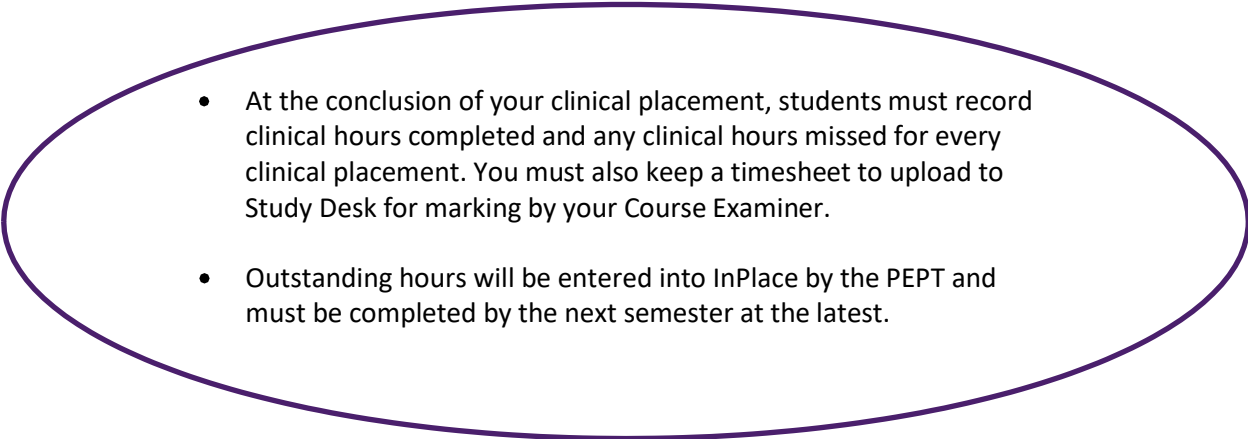
### **Missed Hours (up to 16 hours)**

If you have missed up to 16 hours or 2 shifts (whichever is greater) you are expected to arrange makeup while on your current placement if the facility can allow/facilitate this.

### **Missed Hours (over 16 hours and under 40 hours)**

If you have missed up to 40 hours or 3 - 5 shifts you must make this time up during your next clinical placement or at the earliest time possible if the make-up is required in the final semester of your enrolment.

Students in this category who have provided acceptable documents supporting their missed hours, will be placed on an IDM until they complete their assessment and the hours required.

- 
- At the conclusion of your clinical placement, students must record clinical hours completed and any clinical hours missed for every clinical placement. You must also keep a timesheet to upload to Study Desk for marking by your Course Examiner.
  - Outstanding hours will be entered into InPlace by the PEPT and must be completed by the next semester at the latest.

### Missed Hours (over 40 hours)

If you miss more than 40 hours, with supporting documentation to justify this, you will be required to make-up hours in the clinical areas you should have completed the hours. The grade that is entered will be decided by the course examiner, but the student **MUST** have completed a successful Interim report, achieved some of the required competencies and have an accurate timesheet.

Students who fall into this category and have provided legitimate documentation to support missed hours and level of competence, will be provided with another placement in that semester, if there is still enough time to allow them to complete their clinical placement; OR, if there is not enough time remaining in the semester, or there are no suitable placements available, the student will be advised to withdraw from the course. In some cases, an extended period of make-up time can only be allocated in Semester 3.

It is **your responsibility** to ensure you keep a record of any hours/days that have been missed and need to be made up. You must email your course examiner as well as the PEPT to advise them of the missed shifts. There must be a **genuine reason** (see Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances policy) for a shift change or shifts to be missed.

**If the facility is unable to provide the makeup time needed, contact the PEPT, Course Examiner or Clinical Education Lead for advice about organising makeup hours. Some facilities do not want to be asked about makeup opportunities – this will be noted in your orientation information**

### Public Holidays

If there is a Public Holiday on one of your practice/clinical days and the area/facility you are doing placement in is open and functioning, students will be expected to work the shift. If the area/facility is closed for the public holiday those missed hours must be made up.

### Makeup

You must notify your Course Examiner and the PEPT when you are sick or unable to attend a shift. **All missed shifts must be recorded on your timesheet as well.** If you are able to make up the hours at your placement, include this information on your timesheet and **identify that you are making up shifts.** This will be submitted to your Course Examiner at the end of your placement.

It is your responsibility to discuss your makeup shift requirements with the NUM/Preceptor to ensure you have completed the required hours at the end of your program and that you are eligible to graduate. Don't leave it to the last minute!

Please notify the PEPT if you are having difficulty obtaining makeup shifts.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT, BEHAVIOUR AND RESPONSIBILITIES ON PLACEMENTS**

These guidelines aim to provide guidance for you about correct conduct and behaviour, what is expected from you and your responsibilities while on placement. Preceptors and Clinical Facilitators are provided with a handbook specifically related to their roles and responsibilities in providing support and clinical supervision to students.

Students will comply with the [USQ Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)

- If there is a breach of this policy, students may be asked to leave a facility and may obtain a fail grade for the clinical course

### **Student Evaluation of Clinical Teaching Effectiveness**

Students are asked to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of their clinical placement supervisor/facilitator/LINC staff while on clinical placement. The link to this evaluation survey is located on the midwifery clinical course on study desk. The Course Examiner will read the evaluations and comments made by students at the end of the clinical placement and use this feedback to inform future clinical placements for students. If you have any concerns about the ability of the staff at a facility to provide an effective and supportive experience, follow up communication with the Placement Supervisor may be arranged by the Clinical Education Lead or Midwifery Program Coordinator. Please always ensure, the comments that you make are constructive as the outcome of this exercise is to promote the effectiveness of clinical teaching.

## **RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

[Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Harassment and Discrimination Complaint Resolution for Students Policy and Procedure](#)

[Student Complaint and Appeal Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety](#)

[Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances Policy](#)

## RISK MANAGEMENT

As you take part in the clinical placement program, it is essential that you are aware of the hazards that could occur during placement. You have an obligation to protect yourself and minimise any potential incident from an identified hazard. Below are some common hazards that you might encounter and some strategies to minimise the associated risk. If at any time on a placement you feel unsafe or uncomfortable with a possible or actual risk, you must notify the PEPT.

*In the event that an adverse incident occurs while you are on placement, please comply with the Facilities Work Health & Safety (WH&S) policies. You must also complete a USQ incident form (from MUM site) and then return it to your Course Examiner.*

**For safety concerns or emergencies that arise after hours phone  
1300 99 82 36**

### Insurance while on Placement

While you are on a compulsory placement for your course, you will be covered by USQ insurance for some aspects of your placement. Please go to the [MUM](#) site for more information on what is covered and what is not covered, how you qualify for this and how to make a claim.

### Emergencies that arise while on Placement

While you are on a compulsory placement for your course, there are guidelines which apply to you should an emergency requiring medical care arise. Please review these guidelines on your [MUM](#) site before you go on your placements as they advise what sort of care would be covered by USQ and what would be the responsibility of the student.



## Injury while on Placement

If a student is injured or becomes unwell on placement and the Student/CF/Preceptor/NUM assess that an Emergency Department consult is necessary:

If the student is on placement and on duty in a Private Facility with an Emergency Department (ED), where payment is required:

- The student is offered the choice to either be transported to the ED or to be transported outside of the hospital to a public facility ED via QAS
- Contact Professional Experience Placements Office immediately on 07 4631 2974 (in business hours) or 1300 99 82 36 (after business hours).
- If the student chooses to stay in the private hospital ED, and the injury is a WorkCover claim, the student should be informed the University will not be responsible for any costs incurred for consults and treatment
- If the student chooses to stay in the private hospital ED due to an acute illness, the student should be informed the University will pay for the initial consult, **but will not be responsible** for any costs incurred for investigations, further consults and treatment

If the student is on placement and on duty in a **Public Facility with an ED**:

- The student is offered the choice to either be transported to the ED or to be transported outside of the hospital to a private facility ED via QAS. In this instance of leaving the hospital, the University will **not** be responsible for any costs incurred for consults and treatment
- The student should be encouraged to remain in the public hospital ED where there are no costs involved for consults, investigations and treatments
- Contact Professional Experience Placements Office immediately on 1300 99 82 36
- If the student chooses to travel to a private hospital ED, and the injury is a WorkCover claim, the student should be informed the University will not be responsible for any costs incurred for consults and treatment
- If the student chooses to travel to a private hospital ED due to an acute illness, the student should be informed the University will pay for the initial consult, but will not be responsible for any costs incurred for investigations, further consults and treatment



## Student travel to and from placements

If you are working late or night shifts while on clinical, please ensure you are familiar with the security officers and relevant contact numbers for that facility. A security officer may be available to escort you to your car or public transport before and after work.

There is a risk of motor vehicle accidents when travelling to and from placement. Travelling distances to rural or remote placement can be tiring. It is recommended that you take **regular breaks and stops in this journey**. Refer to study desk if there are other students travelling to the same destination, you may be able to share the journey with them. Please ensure your vehicle is safe for travelling long distances and you keep the fuel tank reasonably well filled. It is recommended that you have a roadside assistance policy in the event of a break down. Be aware of distances between towns. Please ensure your mobile phone is sufficiently charged at all times. Always keep someone informed of your whereabouts if you are in or travelling to a remote location.

If you are driving to a placement it is important that you practice safe driving  
<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/licensing/getting/education/defensive/index.html>

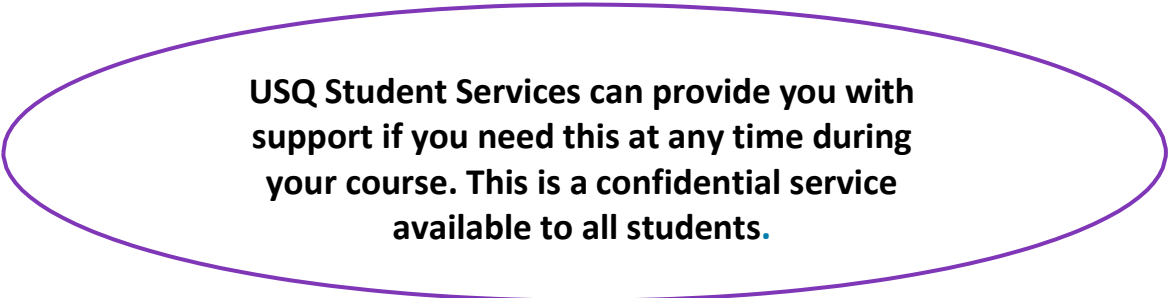
If you are on prescribed medications consult your General Practitioner as to whether it is safe for you to drive. Remember to park your vehicle in areas that the health care facility has deemed suitable for staff to park. If you are leaving a health care facility after hours remember to abide by the security conditions of the facility to **minimise any risk to yourself**.

## Reasonable work hours

A roster will be created for you to complete on your clinical placement. Rosters may include **shifts that are up to 12 hours**. As a student you cannot work more than 12 hours in one shift. It is recommended that you **will not do more** than 5 shifts one after another, that are 8 to 12 hours long.

Discuss your hours with your midwife preceptor in order to ensure you meet facility requirements, staffing/roster requirements and clinical requirements.

**Meal break entitlements** may depend on the facility where you work, however generally you are entitled to a 10 minute break for each 4 hours of a shift e.g. 20 minutes in an 8 hour shift/30 minutes in a 12 hour shift. These can be joined together and taken as a 20 or 30 minute break if desired. You are also entitled to a 30 minute 'unpaid' break in an 8 hour shift and 2 x 30 minute breaks in a 12 hour shift (1 x 30 minute breaks is 'unpaid'). This means your rostered hours for an 8 hour shift will be 8.5 hours and 12.5 hours for a 12 hour shift to accommodate the 'unpaid' breaks. **Remember** your hours of work need to meet the placements required number of hours.



**USQ Student Services can provide you with support if you need this at any time during your course. This is a confidential service available to all students.**



## Paid work hours and practice/clinical placements

Your clinical placement takes priority over other work commitments. Please give your employer plenty of notice, so work does not impact on your ability to attend your clinical shifts.

The university understands the need for students to work to support themselves financially. You must consider **fatigue policies** when completing a placement and also having paid work.

To make sure you comply with the fatigue policies in many facilities you must balance your paid work and clinical placement hours.

**You CANNOT work full time and attend placement as this conflicts with health facilities fatigue policies and places the public at risk.**

It is also vital for your safety that you do not complete an out of university paid shift and then a clinical shift **directly after**. This is outside Queensland and Tasmanian Health and Private Health Facilities workplace health and safety rules. For example, students should not finish a night shift as a RN in their paid job and then attend a morning shift as a student in a hospital ward. If you do not understand this, please contact the PEPT for help.

## Extenuating Circumstances or Disaster Management processes

Students are allocated placements across a variety of settings within health care. If a serious situation arises that results in a facility activating their disaster management plan, it is vital that **students follow the lead of the clinical team** within the facility. These events might include utilities failure, flood, fire, ward closure, codes for violent behaviours or any other significant event.

If at any time while on clinical placement you feel unsafe or not comfortable with a potential or actual risk, you must **notify the Placements office**. If this event occurs after hours, then use the after-hours number.

## Infectious disease risk

Cross infection, the transfer of harmful bacteria from one person, object, or place to another, or from one part of the body to another (such as touching a staph-infected hand to the eye) is one of the risks of being a health care provider.

- Not complying with immunisation requirements increases your risk of being infected with a disease through exposure to blood and body substances in the clinical setting.
- There is risk of being infected with a disease by being exposed to blood, body substances or infected materials. The risk is increased if you have an open wound, such as a cut on the finger.
- There is a risk of being infected with an acute infectious disease, such as influenza, from being with infected individuals.
- Handling of any object capable of causing a penetrating injury (for example needles) while on placement can possibly cause injury and infection.

These **risks can be reduced** by maintaining your health and immunity, maintaining your personal hygiene, undergoing immunisation and health tests, using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and complying with local workplace infection control procedures (which include procedures for sharps injuries and blood exposure).

In the event that a splash or needle stick injury occurs, **you must immediately tell** the health care facility contact person, and the Placements Office and complete the reporting process discussed on page 27.

## Psychological risk

If you believe that you are being **bullied or harassed** while on placement you should try to raise the issue with the person if possible or speak to your placement supervisor and/or course examiner. If you feel uncomfortable with addressing the situation with the person involved, **you MUST contact** the PEPT to discuss the matter further and ask for help or intervention. Student services can provide you with support and guidance while a management plan is decided.

## Manual handling risk

Good manual handling can protect you from strains, sprains and other injuries. If you have an injury or significant weakness in one or more of your limbs or your back, or you are pregnant, you are at a greater risk of injury. Ensure you **practice safe manual handling practices**. Think before you lift! Consider what other options might be used to reduce the risk of injury from manual lifting.

A **No Lift Policy** is enforced in almost all QHealth, Tasmanian, Private and other Facilities.

In the event that you sustain an injury before or during your clinical placement time **you MUST contact** the Placements office and report this.

## Reporting an incident

If you have an injury or an incident while you are on placement, **you must report it to your placement supervisor, the health care facility contacts and the USQ Placement Team immediately**. You will be required to complete an incident report for the facility (obtained from your Preceptor) as well as a USQ incident form (obtained from MUM site). **These must be done as soon as possible after the incident**.

Once each of these is completed and submitted to the health care facility and to your Course Examiner respectively, please make sure you comply with the facility WH&S policy, keep a copy of both reports and attend to any follow up recommended.



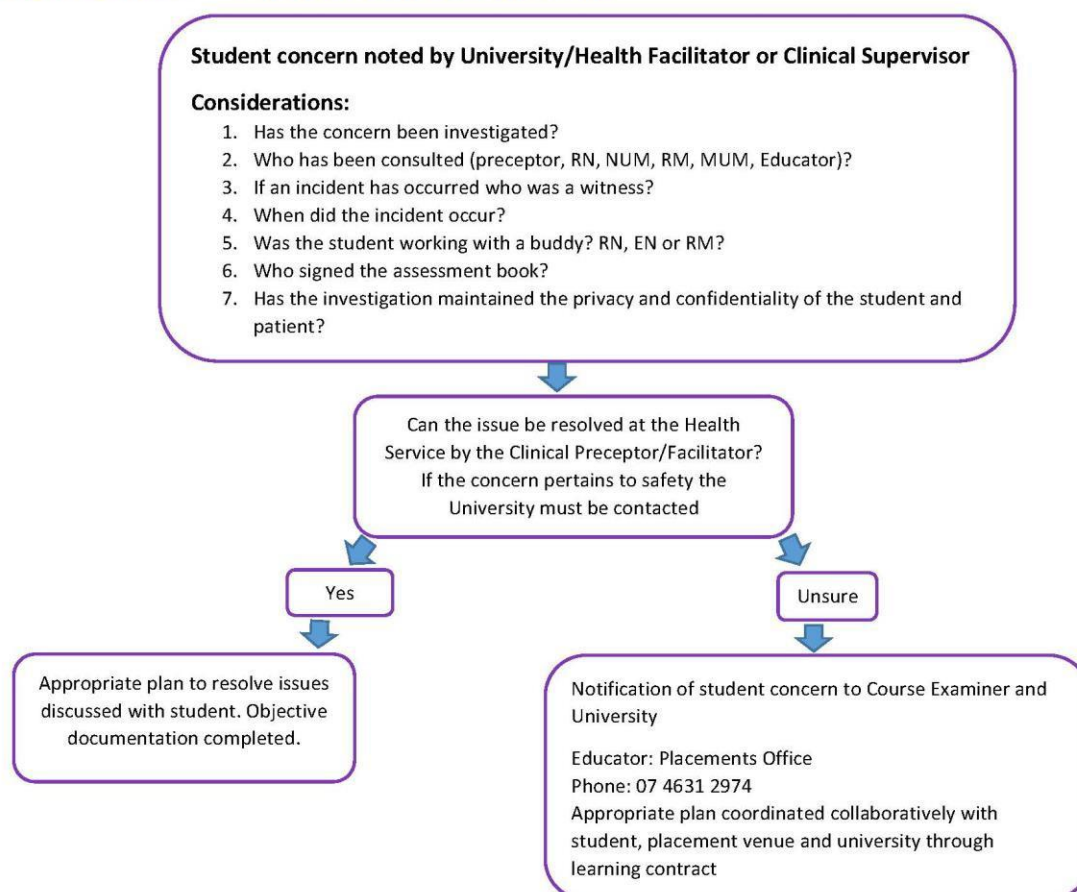
## IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT RELATED CONCERNS

The following guidelines are used when areas of student responsibility are not fulfilled. This can be where a performance concern has been identified or where a student is unfit or unprofessional. Initial communication with the student and university representative is very important. This flowchart is to assist in addressing concerns and providing support and guidance to the student and the facility.

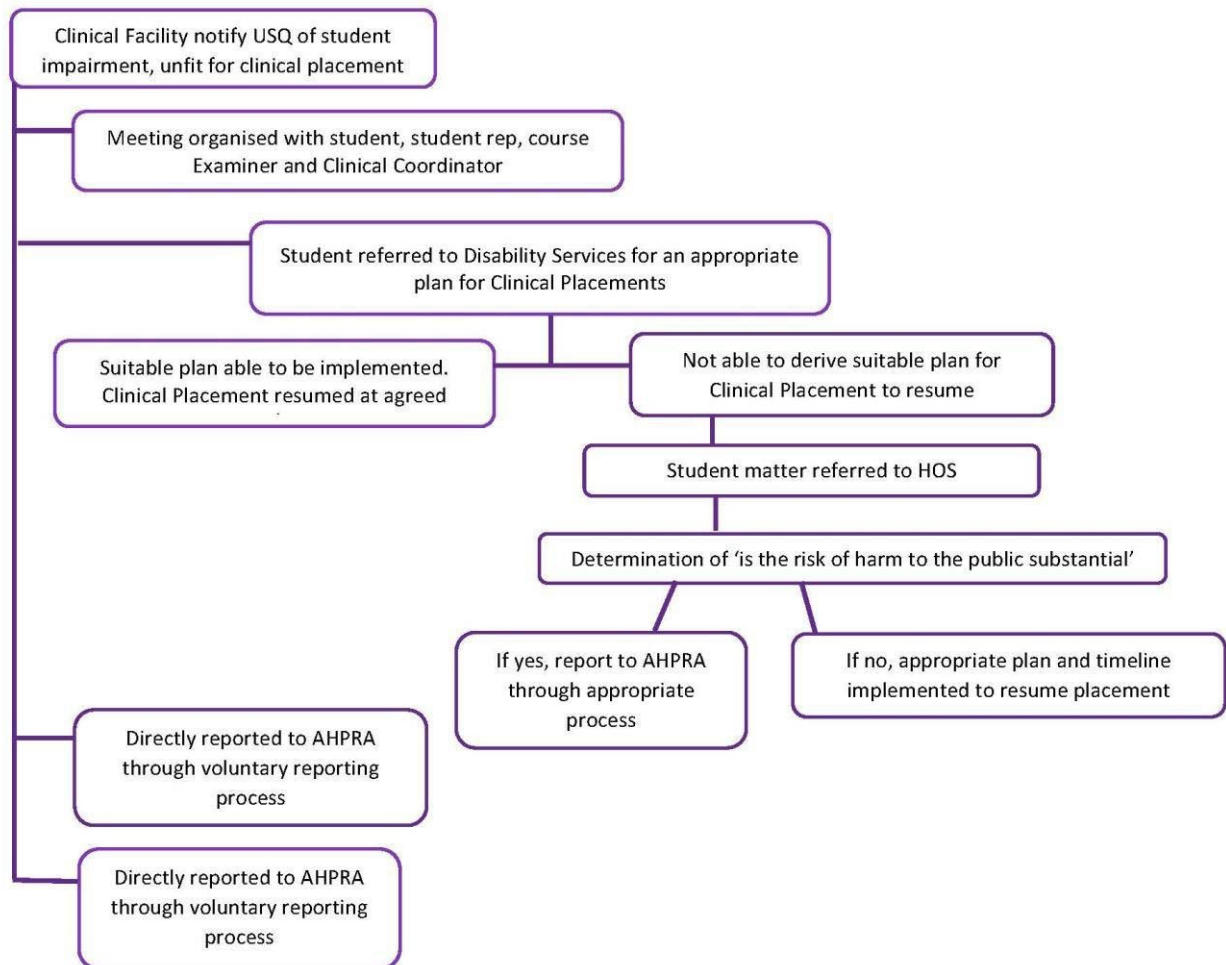
These charts act as a guide for student management issues however each concern is managed independently based on what is required. For concerns that are serious, a more complex decision guide is used. This needs to be conducted with the University and Health Facility collaboratively.

1. Decision Guide – Performance Concern
2. Decision Guide – Unfit for Clinical Placements (P. 29)

### Decision Guide – Performance Concern



## Decision Guide – Unfit for Practice/Clinical Placements



## CLINICAL COURSE SPECIFICATIONS

The course specification for each clinical course gives the information you must have about course evaluation. Download your course specification and become familiar with what you must do so you can plan how to obtain a passing grade in the course. Information about your Clinical and Midwifery Practice Courses can be found on the Study Desk Sites, the [MUM](#) site and InPlace

## Midwifery Practice Portfolio

Students intending to study the part-time pathway must only enrol in two courses (one theory and one clinical course) each semester and as outlined in BMID (GE) handbook for the part-time pathway. There is a need to proceed swiftly upon receipt of an offer to enrol in clinical courses and to submit mandatory documents in advance of commencement of semester and attendance at the first residential school, as this secures a student's placement and their ability to study a clinical course.

The Midwifery Practice Portfolio contains a multitude of mandatory requirements documents such as cumulative records, the Victorian Standardised Clinical Assessment Tool for Midwifery Students, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition; practice reflections and evaluations. You will be required to upload these documents, following the checklist in your Midwifery Practice Portfolio, to your clinical courses for assessment.

It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all your placement assessments and timesheets throughout your course. If a problem arises, you may need this information to prove you have completed a placement. You may also need them when applying for a graduate position once you complete your Bachelor of Midwifery.

**The Placement Office do not have copies of these documents should you lose your copy.**

## MIDWIFERY STUDENT DECLARATION 2022

Every student must complete and submit the following declaration to confirm they have read and understood the entire contents of this handbook. Without completion of this handbook students' risk not being permitted to attend Clinical or Midwifery Practice Placements. This Guide has been produced to aid students in their understanding of clinical or midwifery practice placement expectations and requirements

- I declare I have read and understood the Professional Practice Experience Handbook for Midwifery Students.
- I understand that I must abide by the standards described within the Professional Practice Experience Handbook for Midwifery Students. I understand that I need to contact the Professional Placements Office if I am unable to meet the obligations for workplace experience at any stage of my course progression.
- I understand and accept my student responsibilities as outlined in the Professional Practice Experience Handbook for Midwifery Students
- I understand and consent to the University providing relevant personal/health (including mandatory document) information about me to placement agencies as necessary for placement purposes only

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I understand that I must notify the Professional Placements Office of any written notices issued by the Commissioner for Young People and Child Guardian or from the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as soon as I am notified of such a notice.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is part of the pre placements mandatory requirements for all students that attend clinical placements within health care facilities from the University of Southern Queensland. It is required to be submitted to the Professional Placements Office.