



# **General guidelines for your activities while on placement**

# Contents

<b><u>Personal presentation</u></b> .....	3
<u>Uniforms</u> .....	3
<u>Footwear</u> .....	3
<u>General appearance</u> .....	4
<u>Jewellery</u> .....	4
<b><u>Placement attendance</u></b> .....	5
<u>Your responsibilities</u> .....	5
<u>Placement Requirements</u> .....	5
<u>Placement Attendance on Public Holidays</u> .....	6
<u>Absence from placement</u> .....	6
<u>Placement at your normal workplace</u> .....	6
<u>Placement Cancellation</u> .....	7
<b><u>Professional behaviour</u></b> .....	8
<u>Conduct and behaviour</u> .....	8
<u>Confidentiality and privacy</u> .....	9
<u>Confidentiality</u> .....	9
<u>Privacy</u> .....	10
<u>Patient/client rights</u> .....	11
<u>Social media and placement experience</u> .....	11
<u>Health and safety whilst on Placement</u> .....	12
<u>Health and safety induction</u> .....	12
<u>Accidents, incidents or injuries whilst on placement</u> .....	12
<u>Risk management</u> .....	13
<u>Student travel to and from placement</u> .....	13
<u>Manual handling on placement</u> .....	14
<u>Psychological risk whilst on Placement</u> .....	14
<u>Infectious disease risk</u> .....	15
<u>Sexual Harassment whilst on Placement</u> .....	15
<u>If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed</u> .....	16
<u>Pregnancy</u> .....	16
<b><u>Placements for Students with a disability</u></b> .....	17
<b><u>Performance on Placement</u></b> .....	17
<u>Feedback</u> .....	17
<u>Listen to feedback</u> .....	17
<u>Ask for further feedback</u> .....	18
<u>I got feedback, now what?</u> .....	18
<u>Say thank you</u> .....	18

# Guidelines for your activities while on placement

Whilst on placement, students are expected to adhere to the various guidelines for their behaviour and conduct. Students are expected to practice safely and within scope under the guidance of their placement supervisors.

The links below provide more information on what is expected from students, the university and placement supervisors.

## Personal presentation

Whilst on placement students should dress in appropriate attire, as outlined in the relevant School and/or facility dress codes/policies as well as their respective [Placement Handbook](#). Students inappropriately dressed for placement may be requested to change or be removed from the placement.

### Uniforms

A USQ Student ID is to be carried with you at all times. Some Schools may also provide specific name badges to be worn on placement, such as the Nursing Clinical ID. For more information on obtaining your Student or Clinical ID, go [here](#).

Some placement disciplines require students to wear their official USQ placement uniform whilst on placement. For more information on requirements and where to purchase relevant uniforms, please refer to your [Placement Handbook](#).

You should refer to and comply with any additional requirements specified in your School's Dress Code. Do not hesitate to [contact](#) the Professional Experience Placement Office for more details.

### Footwear

Appropriate footwear is to be worn at all times and should be clean, neat and tidy. In patient/client care areas/laboratories all footwear must enclose the toes and be a non-slip sole to minimise injuries resulting from spills or dropped items. It is important that footwear is not cloth, multi-coloured, or open-toe.

## General appearance

- Hair should be clean, neat and tidy.
- All garments should be clean, ironed, neat and tidy.
- No bare midriffs.
- Nail polish or acrylic nails can be a source for infection and cross-infection and should not be worn when undertaking a clinical placement (for example a placement in a hospital or dental clinic). Chipping of nail polish can reduce effectiveness of hand washing, harbour bacteria and contaminate wounds.

## Jewellery

Exercise judgement about wearing jewellery in keeping with maintaining a professional appearance and avoiding risk.

Any jewellery worn must not be able to damage a patient/client's skin.

No offensive jewellery; nose, lip, eyebrow or tongue jewellery (even plain studs) are not generally acceptable to the public and may detract from a professional appearance.

No unnecessary jewellery; when undertaking a clinical placement (for example a placement in a hospital or dental clinic) avoid wearing dangling jewellery/loop earrings which may become caught while working.

Jewellery is a source for infection and interferes with procedures.



# Placement attendance

## Your responsibilities

- All assessable placement experience is mandatory. It is expected that you will attend 100% of your placement experience.
- Be punctual to your placement.
- Placement experience may involve working morning, afternoon or night shifts and/or weekend work in various facilities. You need to carefully plan your personal and family requirements to enable you to undertake these experiences.
- All aspects of the placement attendance outside of arranging the placement are the student's responsibility. This includes: arranging child-minding; organising transport to and from the placement; and also advising the Professional Experience Placement Office of make-up requirements where a student missed hours for reasons outside of their control (supporting documentation will need to be provided).
- Any costs associated with travel to and from placement, accommodation or other associated costs are a student responsibility.

## Placement Requirements

At any time while on placement you may be asked to provide a valid Blue Card, Australian Federal Police Certificate or a National Police Certificate issued by your relevant state/territory police service or an Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission accredited organisation, evidence of immunisations and health tests and mandatory requirements as applicable to your University Program and/or the host organisation/facility.

Supervisors/facilities are encouraged to orientate you to the organisation in which you will undertake placement.

Where your performance is deemed incomplete because you have not completed the experiential time requirements of the placement, you should consult the course or program convenor/relevant school placement staff member.

## **Placement Attendance on Public Holidays**

You are not required to attend placement at facilities for periods formally designated by the Government as a public holiday for the state of Queensland. In some instances, alternative public holidays are designated for different geographical jurisdictions. For periods designated as public holidays:

- You will attend placement if you reside in a non-gazetted area but are scheduled to attend placement at a within a gazetted area. You will not have to attend the placement if the facility is within the jurisdiction designated as a public holiday.
- You may be required to undertake placement outside the published University timetables and clinical placement calendars.
- Where the Facility is open and operating you may attend your preceptored placement on a public holiday if you wish to do so and your Supervisor is agreeable – except in periods where the University is closed for business between Christmas and New Year.
- Where your placement is facilitated, you will not be permitted to attend placement on Public Holidays.

## **Absence from placement**

Outside of Public Holidays, it is expected that you will attend 100% of your assessable placement experience.

If you miss any placement hours for reasons outside of your control, you are required to contact the Professional Experience Placements office as soon as possible and you will also need to provide supporting documentation.

## **Placement at your normal workplace**

A student may have an interest to undertake their placement at their regular place of employment.

Placements are a clearly defined component of a University course (in terms of competencies/practical activities/hours) and therefore, students will require School permission to undertake a placement in their workplace. Any placement undertaken at a student's regular workplace will need to be in an area in which they do not undertake their normal day-to-day duties i.e. in a different ward or department of the organisation.



## Placement Cancellation

Placements normally involve the provision of supervision and other support by/to host organisations outside of the University. It is possible that as a result of unforeseen or unavoidable factors impacting an organisation, a placement that has been arranged may need to be cancelled or rescheduled, sometimes at late notice.

The University reserves the right to cancel or reschedule clinical placements in such circumstances and will notify students of alternative placement arrangements as soon as possible.

If you experience financial difficulty when you are on placement, you are encouraged to contact [USQ Student Services](#) to explore the wide range of services and support on offer.



# Professional behaviour

Whilst on placement you are representing the University of Southern Queensland and you are required to be aware of your personal responsibility to:

- obey the law and reasonable instructions/policies of the facility with which you are undertaking placement;
- respect the security and confidentiality of any information which you may receive from the facility in the course of your placement experience; and
- maintain a professional standard of conduct befitting a student of The University of Southern Queensland.

## Conduct and behaviour

You are required to comply with the:

- [Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [General Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

In addition, you should familiarise yourself with any other legislation, Code of Ethics and/or Professional Conduct relevant to your degree program and as outlined in your [Placement Handbook](#).

When a student is identified as conducting themselves in a manner inconsistent with the stated policies and/or codes they may be removed from a placement and the process outlined in the policy and/or code applicable to the type of misconduct will be initiated.





# Confidentiality and privacy

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to safe and ethical practice as a health or human service professional. Confidentiality refers to the protection of private information provided by an individual. Confidentiality involves treating identifiable and private information disclosed to you privately with the expectation that it will not be divulged except in ways that have been previously agreed upon.

Maintain confidentiality about:

- what you hear and observe in the facility, including that about other workers and colleagues; and
- written and electronic materials that you have access to including reports, files, emails and statements.

Observe the following practices:

- Never disclose confidential patient/client information without the patient/client's consent to any person who is not authorised to receive it
- If you think the patient/client is at risk of harm to themselves or others notify your placement supervisor
- Use discretion and sensitivity when discussing patient/clients so that you cannot be overheard by other patient/clients, the general public or any other unauthorised person
- Never discuss patient/clients by name or other identifying features, with anyone not entitled to this information
- Never allow a patient/client or patient/client's friends and relatives to see facility records. Release of patient/client records is the prerogative of the facility. Your access to records is a privilege
- Never leave patient/client/medical records unsecured (e.g. left unattended where they may be read by an unauthorised person) and never remove patient/client/medical records from the facility
- When using personal information in case study assignments or discussions, you must never use identifying information (instead use a false name and avoid detailing information that may identify the person)

There will be times when patient/client information will need to be transferred and discussed between workers, facilities and government departments. There are strict rules, procedures and ethics governing this process and you should familiarise yourselves with them at the commencement of the placement. Various facilities may also require you to sign a confidentiality agreement or standards of confidentiality form on the first day of your placement.

## **Privacy**

Privacy is about protecting information that says who we are, what we do, what we think, what we believe.

The University considers it is important to respect privacy. Whenever the University collects, uses or discloses personal information, it must do so in accordance with policy and with privacy laws. You should become familiar with the following privacy policies:

[USQ Privacy Policy](#)  
[Information Privacy Act 2009](#)  
[Right to Information Act 2009](#)

Refer to the following policies prior to placement in a Queensland Health facility:

[Queensland Health Privacy Policy](#)

Refer to the following policy prior to placement in a NSW Health facility:

[NSW Health Privacy Manual](#)

Other organisations and facilities will have their own privacy policy. It is your responsibility to enquire about and familiarise yourself with the privacy policy of the host site you are attending for placement.

## Patient/client rights

Students should at all times respect patient or clients' rights and privacy. Patient or clients are not attending the health or human service facility for student benefit – they are at the facility to receive the best possible care for their health or other problems.

Patient/clients have the right to:

- Be treated with respect, dignity and as an individual (not as a case or condition)
- Decide whether or not they wish to be assisted, assessed and/or treated by a student
- Be given choice to accept or decline treatment/services based on provision of sound information
- Be involved in decisions about the management of their health problems
- Be fully informed of the potential risks and benefits of any procedure that is deemed necessary or desirable during the provision of a health service
- Be given privacy and their own personal space
- Be treated without prejudice
- Not have their personal information disclosed to any other person without the express permission of the patient/client concerned
- Be cared for in a safe manner and environment

It is recommended students read the [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#) prior to placement.

## Social media and placement experience

As a student you are not to post any information about your placement experience, patients, clients, the facility or 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.

Health discipline students are strongly advised to read the [National Board policy for Health Professionals Social Media policy \(2014\)](#). Also, please refer to the [Student Code of Conduct Policy](#).

# Health and safety whilst on Placement

## Health and safety induction

A basic [Student Safety Induction](#) is available for completion by all students regardless of course length or duration.

Prior to your first placement you are also required to complete an online [QHealth Work Health and Safety Induction](#). A health and safety induction aim to prepare you for your placement and covers the main areas of risk you may encounter on a placement.

A further Health and Safety induction specific to the placement site may also be offered on the first day of placement.

## Accidents, incidents or injuries whilst on placement

### *Management of an accident, incident or injury*

In the event of an accident, incident or injury, no matter how minor the incident may seem, you must report to:

- a First Aid Officer who will initiate first aid treatment if required; and
- your supervisor; and
- when practicable, report the matter to your course examiner to complete a USQ Incident/Injury Report form on your behalf.
- if psychologically affected by a placement related event consult [USQ Student Services](#).

### *Infection control*

Prior to any clinical placement you should familiarise yourself with the following infection control procedures

- your School Infection Control Procedures
- the placement site's Infection Control Procedures.

Within health care facilities, Infection Control Programs aim to promote the use of strategies and procedures to prevent or minimise the spread of infection.

Standard precautions form the basis for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare settings and include:

- good hygiene practices, particularly maintaining proper hand hygiene (you can find Hand Hygiene Training [online](#));
- immunisation;
- adherence to good aseptic technique procedures which help prevent and control healthcare associated infections.
- adherence to dress code;
- protective clothing (such as sterile disposable gloves) and PPE where required;
- appropriate handling and disposal of sharps; and
- maintenance of a clean, safe environment.

## **Risk management**

It is important that you are aware of any hazards that could occur while on placement and minimise any potential incident from an identified hazard. Below are some common hazards that you might encounter, and ways to minimise the risk associated with the hazard:

### **Student travel to and from placement**

There is a risk of traffic accidents when travelling to and from a placement. If you are driving to a placement it is important that you practice safe and responsible driving. If you are on prescribed medications consult your doctor as to whether it is safe for you to drive.

The University's insurance cover does not extend to motor vehicles therefore it is recommended you insure your vehicle for any damages that may be caused to your and other vehicles or property.



## Manual handling on placement

Manual handling means any activity requiring a force for a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object. In preventing any injury, you must identify the factor likely to cause injury, the likelihood of injury occurring and the severity of damage then develop ways of controlling the risk. Back pain and injuries related to manual handling are some of the most frequent types of injuries, both on and off the job.

A fall, impact, or extreme load may cause a back injury. Sudden unexpected force can also cause injury. More commonly damage is caused over time by the cumulative effect of wear and tear and by consistently doing things the wrong way.

If you have an injury or significant weakness in one or more of your limbs or back, or you are pregnant, you are at even greater risk. Ensure you practice safe manual handling practices. Consider whether there is an alternative to manual lifting.

[USQ Manual Handling Procedure](#)

## Psychological risk whilst on Placement

If you believe that you are being bullied or harassed while on placement you may wish to raise the issue with the person if possible, or speak to your supervisor and/or course examiner.

You can also contact a [USQ Harassment and Diversity Contact Officer](#).

If psychologically affected by a placement related event you can contact [USQ Student Services](#).

## **Infectious disease risk**

Healthcare workers are occupationally exposed to a range of infectious diseases during the performance of their duties. There is risk of contracting an infectious disease through handling and exposure to blood, body fluids or infectious materials. The risk is increased if you have an open wound, such as a cut on the finger.

There is a risk of contracting an acute infectious disease, such as influenza, from exposure to infected individuals.

Handling of any object capable of inflicting penetrating injury (for example needles) while on placement has the potential to cause injury and infection.

To minimize the risk of contracting an infection, students should adhere to standard precautions, including the appropriate use of hand washing, protective barriers, and care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments. These risks can further be reduced by maintaining your health and immunity, maintaining your personal hygiene, undergoing vaccination and routine health tests.

## **Sexual Harassment whilst on Placement**

Sexual Harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual Harassment can take many different forms. It can be obvious or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one-off, and perpetrated by males and females against people of the same or opposite sex.

Sexual Harassment may include:

- staring or leering;
- unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person, or unwelcome touching;
- suggestive comments or jokes;
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life;
- displaying posters, magazines or screen-savers of a sexual nature;
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites;
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites;
- requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates;

- behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Sexual Harassment is not interaction, flirtation or friendship which is mutual or consensual.

### **If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed**

If sexual harassment has occurred within the university community or whilst on placement, you can [report a concern or incident](#). Further [support resources](#) are available for you or someone you know who has experienced sexual harassment. Your Host Placement site will likely also have additional support resources in relation to sexual harassment. You can also contact a [USQ Harassment and Diversity Contact Officer](#).

### **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 Professional Experience Placement office with a letter from your doctor with 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 [Placement Team](#) to discuss these and make a plan that may allow you to still do your placement.

# Placements for Students with a disability

If you have a physical, sensory, psychiatric, learning or intellectual impairment, or long term medical condition which impacts upon your daily living activities, you may be identified as having a disability. If you care for someone who is identified as having a disability, you are also eligible for support from USQ Disability Resources.

Further information about the different types of disability or long term medical conditions and the impacts upon the learning environments, is available on the [Creating Accessible Teaching & Support website](#).

If you have a disability or medical condition that impacts on your studies, you may qualify to [register](#) with USQ Disability Resources for a range of [support services](#) that may be available to you.

## Performance on Placement

Some key elements to ensure that you have a successful placement are:

- Maintain professionalism at all times;
- Taking responsibility for your own actions;
- discussing learning needs and concerns with your supervisor or course examiner;
- continually reflecting on your performance and;
- ensuring that you obtain adequate feedback on your performance from your supervisor and course examiner.

### Feedback

Feedback is the key to success and continuous professional development. During placement, your Supervisor will provide continuous constructive feedback about your performance. Here are some helpful tips on how to receive feedback and make the most of it:

#### Listen to feedback

Feedback is not always easy to hear. Make a conscious effort to hear what is being said and try to avoid becoming defensive or making assumptions, rather ensure you understand the feedback before you respond to it. Ask a few basic questions to show that you are genuinely interested in resolving any perceived problems.

### **Ask for further feedback**

Sometimes we do get feedback but it is restricted to one aspect of our performance, in this instance and we may have to request the good and bad feedback we would find useful but do not necessarily get.

### **I got feedback, now what?**

Assess the value of the feedback and what you are going to do with it. If the feedback was negative, it is good practice to take in what is being said without letting it control you and instinctively getting emotional. You will build rapport in the workplace for not only being assertive enough to hear negative feedback, but for being proactive and flexible enough to react to the feedback in a positive manner.

### **Say thank you**

Appreciating feedback is a valuable practice to reinforce in any organisation or relationship.

Even when you feel that the critique you have received is inappropriate, maintain your professionalism, following the conversation you are advised to contact your Supervisor and/or Course Examiner to discuss the best way forward.