



**FACULTY OF NURSING
Role of Students During Large Scale Communicable Disease
Outbreaks**

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Authorizing Unit Faculty of Nursing	
Approval Authority Dean, Faculty of Nursing	
Implementation Authority Associate Dean Undergraduate Practice Education & Associate Dean Graduate Programs	
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Purpose

- 1 The purpose of this operating standard is to:

Provide guidance to Students working and learning in the clinical environment. Program safety policies provide guidance to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of the student. These policies reflect discipline – specific variables and risks that arise in unique clinical circumstances. The purpose of this document is to outline broader guiding principles to address the appropriate role of students when health care crises develop that potentially impact all students at all health care teaching sites.

- Scope** 2 This operating standard applies to all faculty members and students, and should be in accordance with the AHS's Provincial Medical Officer of Health and AHS's Emergency Command Centre direction.
- Definitions** 3 In this operating standard:
- a) **“Nursing Instructor (NI)”** refers to any faculty member who teaches an undergraduate level on-campus or off-campus practice course within the Faculty of Nursing. (In Term 8, referred to as “Faculty Advisor”.)
- b) “Nursing Practice Course Coordinator (NPCC)” refers to any faculty who is the Instructor of Record for an undergraduate level practice course within the Faculty of Nursing.
- c) “Nurse Practitioner (NP) Faculty” refers to any faculty member who is a practicing Nurse Practitioner.
- d) “Student” means an individual who is registered in a course or program of study in the Faculty.
- Standard/Practice** 4 **4.1** The following standard is applicable to urgent conditions when a large-scale health care emergency develops involving a communicable disease outbreak, epidemic or pandemic.
- 4.2** In general, students should not be excluded from participating during health care crises. These situations present an important opportunity for learners to develop nursing expertise, communication and leadership skills to address health care emergencies.
- 4.3** Students must follow the appropriate Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) protocols and use appropriate PPE provided, as per the Student Placement Agreement (SPA), where the services are undertaken, along with instructions how to use them.
- 4.4** Permission to participate in direct patient interactions under crisis conditions will depend on competence and scope of practice of the student, balanced with the assessed risk. In most instances the appropriate Associate Dean will make this determination in consideration of the following:
- a. All Undergraduate and Graduate Nursing Students, MAY be restricted from direct involvement in clinical care.
- Students MAY be mobilized for ancillary functions, e.g. for public health calls, information sessions etc.
 - Students may be restricted from direct involvement in healthcare emergencies until they have received appropriate

theory, skills and attitudes relating to PPE to mitigate health risk. Other considerations can include availability of PPE.

- Students MAY need to be restricted from direct involvement in clinical care at the discretion of the Alberta Health Services and Clinical agencies. Agency policies supersede the Faculty policy.
- Nursing Instructors /NP Faculty/ preceptors/mentors may provide direction restricting the clinical care involvement of their students during health care emergencies taking into consideration the risks involved when required.
- Undergraduate Nursing program: exemptions to restrictions at the instructor level MAY be considered by the NPCC in consultation with the Associate Dean.
- Graduate Nursing program: exemptions to restrictions at the instructor level MAY be considered by the NP or Graduate Faculty member in consultation with the Associate Dean

Safety precautions must be instituted and respected as for all Alberta Health Services health care workers as per AHS guideline document named, Managing Students Involved in Placements During a Communicable Disease Outbreak, Epidemic or Pandemic.

Responsibilities

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With Respect to Nursing instructors, NPCC and NP Faculty:

- 5.1** Where appropriate, instructors will continue to fulfill their clinical teaching responsibilities
- 5.2** NPCC or NP Faculty in collaboration with Associate Deans should ensure that frequent, effective two-way communication by email, as appropriate, is maintained with all students throughout and following the health care crisis.
- 5.3** When necessary, the NPCC or NP Faculty and the most appropriate Associate Deans may need to develop alternate means of curriculum delivery, especially the use of distance technologies such as video conferencing and simulations
- 5.4** As appropriate, NPCC, NP or Graduate Faculty in collaboration with the Associate Deans should ensure that new opportunities and new modalities in disasters and crisis are incorporated into the curriculum. If changes occur, changes will need to be tracked and reported to UPC and tracked with NEPAC, etc.
- 5.5** If a student is experiencing crisis or needs psychological support, the student will be referred to the Student Wellness Center. The Faculty member will follow the Student in Crisis Protocol.

Related Information	6	<p>Resources:</p> <p>AHS (2020) Managing students involved in placements during communicable disease outbreaks, epidemic and pandemic</p> <p>https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-managing-students-placements-during-communicable-disease-epidemic-pandemic-guideline.pdf</p> <p>https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/covid-19-response/mental-health-covid-19</p> <p>https://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/needhelp</p> <p>https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services</p>
History	7	<p><i>Approved: PPPC – December 7, 2020</i></p> <p><i>Approved: UPC – January 4, 2021</i></p> <p><i>Approved: GPC – January 20, 2021</i></p> <p><i>Revisions Approved:</i></p>