

York University School of Nursing

Title: Epidemic and Pandemic Guidelines for BScN Students in Practicum Settings	
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UPC Review & Approval Date:	Executive Committee Date: March, 2020
SON Council Decision Date: Approved May 19, 2020	
Effective Date: May 19, 2020	Evaluation Period: Every 2 years
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide guidance for York University School of Nursing (YUSON) faculty, students and staff involved in nursing education in the practicum setting while supporting the continuation of students in their respective programs, in the event of epidemic or pandemic occurrences (refer to <i>Disruption of Practica Policy</i> for local outbreak information and management). • To provide guidelines based on epidemic/pandemic management principles that align with university, regional public health agency, and provincial and federal government body recommendations. • To minimize/mitigate health risk and maximize safety of YUSON faculty, students and staff while engaged in placements and placement-related activities during any epidemic or pandemic occurrence. • To prevent and/or manage any disruptions to nursing students' required practicum learning experiences which occur at an assigned health care or health course-related agency. • To promote compliance with agency affiliation agreements that govern student placements. 	
<p>Applicability</p> <p>This guideline covers all students within a nursing program who are required to complete practicum hours in order to meet course requirements; all faculty who are required to supervise nursing students; and staff who visit practicum sites as part of their work obligations.</p>	
<p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety of students, faculty, staff and the public are a priority and shall be critical to any decisions made during any epidemic or pandemic occurrence. • Agency affiliation agreements must be upheld. • The YUSON is committed to quality learning experience in the practicum settings. • The decisions about student practicum placements will be determined by YUSON administration, in collaboration with the associated agency/agencies. • The following will be considered in decision-making with regards to student 	

practicum placements (not in order):

- Directives from Public Health and the university.
- Availability of agency.
- Year level of students in their respective BScN program.
- Agency staff to offer guidance at the site (depends on staff illness or attendance, redeployment, etc.).
- Availability of YUSON supports and resources.
- Care and safety of patients.
- Communications will be prompt and will be:
 - Initiated by the Director of the YUSON or designate, with general messages to: all faculty, staff and students.
 - Initiated by the Manager, NPCO with messages related to assigned and affected practicum sites/units to: faculty and students.
- In the instance of a York University closure, all students, faculty and staff will follow university policy and will vigilantly monitor email and other communications for classroom attendance and/or resumption of classes.

Definitions:

Faculty:

This includes full and part-time faculty employed by the YUSON.

Pandemic:

Spread of a disease beyond continental boundaries. It is the World Health Organization (WHO) that applies pandemic guidance involving four phases to communicate a high-level global view of the disease's spread.

Epidemic:

A communicable disease event that has spread to multiple regions or provinces. An epidemic is declared by a provincial medical officer of health.

Student Support Processes During an Epidemic or Pandemic Occurrence

1. A communicable disease event can spread to an epidemic (regional outbreak) or to a pandemic (multiple countries). Declaration of a pandemic is made by the WHO and is communicated to all jurisdictions.
2. Students, faculty and staff as applies, are expected to comply with relevant policies and regulations around infection control, surveillance, and occupational health and safety.
 - a. N95 respirators may be required according to occupational health and public health standards and guidelines in certain circumstances. All students entering an agency must have had a confirmed mask-fit test as verified by Synergy as part of the practicum attendance requirements. Not being N95 fit-tested may impede continuation of a placement during an epidemic or pandemic occurrence, if attendance at the agency is to continue.
 - b. Students, faculty and staff should communicate to the NPCO if the appropriate personal protective equipment is not available at an agency.
3. Students, faculty and staff as applies, should familiarize themselves with disease

transmission, the clinical manifestations (signs and symptoms) of the specific communicable disease announced in an epidemic or pandemic occurrence and perform daily self-assessments for the relevant symptoms.

4. A decision tree can be used in such circumstances to facilitate management of students during continued practicum experiences. (See Appendix for situations that involve practicum placements; for situations where clinical is suspended, please refer to items 8-10).

Continued practicum experiences:

5. Students are to attend practicum placements unless they are sent formal notification through YUSON and the NPCO that the learning experience is cancelled or suspended (refer to Appendix), and as per communications with the assigned agency.
6. If any student or faculty member shows symptoms, **they must not attend the placement**. Details relating to the length of time to be removed from the placement will be released with information about the specific communicable disease in the epidemic or pandemic occurrence. Outcomes of absences from the program will be determined according to the related YUSON policies and procedures.
7. Students who choose not to attend scheduled practicum placements may jeopardize completion of their academic program requirements.

In the instance of agency or practicum site closures or suspension:

8. Continuing to meet students' practicum course requirements may become impossible or untenable at some point during an epidemic or pandemic occurrence.
9. Any decisions to cancel or suspend practicum placements may at times be specific to a unit or agency, depending on the extent of disruption. Day-to-day communications may be required.
10. During the incidence of cancelled or suspended clinical experiences, and while the YUSON and university are open, alternative learning experiences may be provided. Any such changes will be communicated to students and faculty by the NSC and the Course Directors.

In the instance of a York University campus closure:

11. The decision to close the university or to limit congregation of larger groups will be determined and communicated by university administration.
12. All students, faculty and staff will comply with the university pandemic protocols.
13. All students, faculty and staff will vigilantly monitor for information about resumption of class schedules.
14. The YUSON will endeavour to implement plans that support students' course and program completion and will communicate general and specific details upon return to normal operations, when announced by the university.

References and Resources

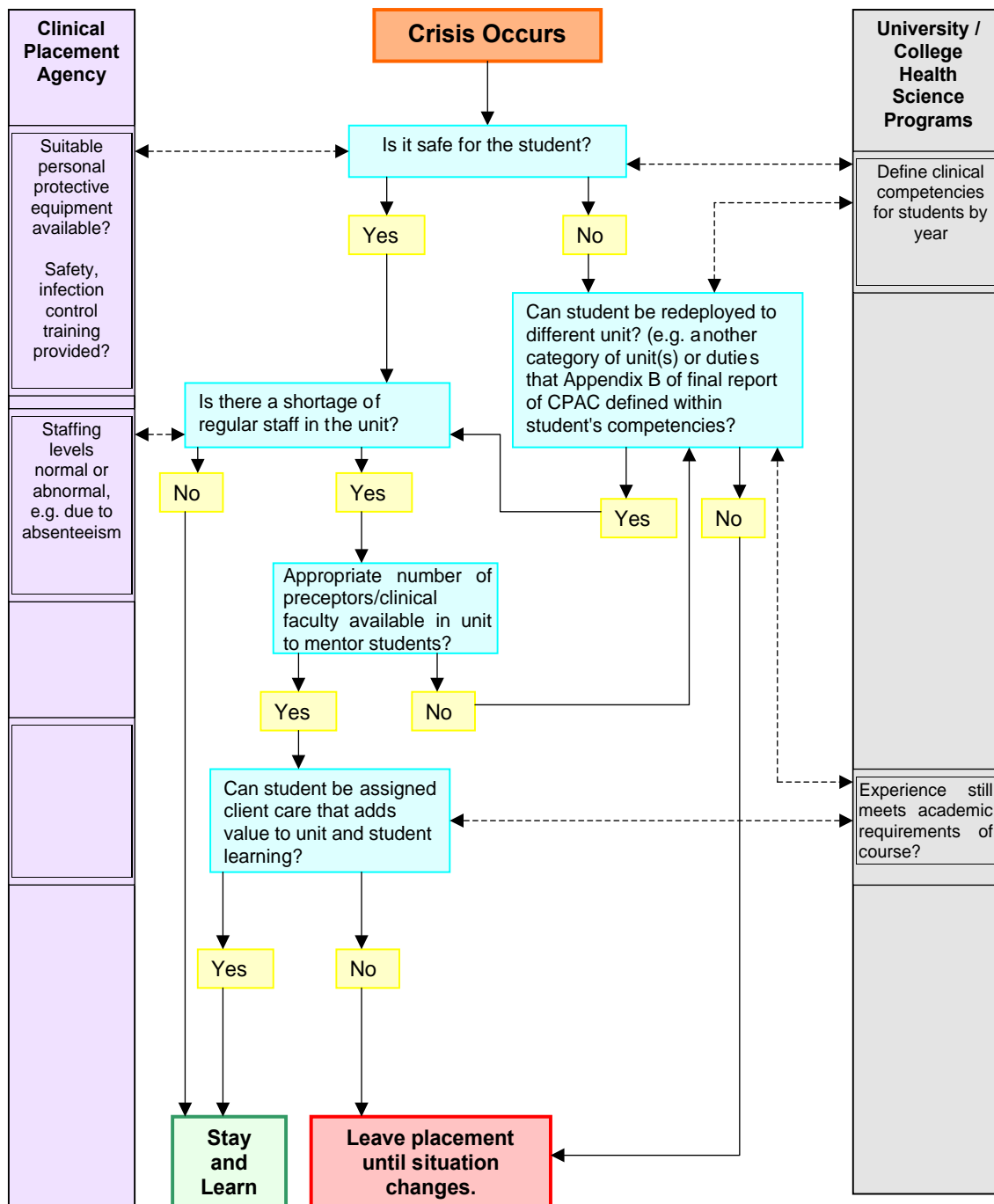
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Appendix

Decision Tree

(adapted from data provided by the Council of Ontario Universities)

DECISION TREE: OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS ON CLINICAL PLACEMENTS



Adapted from: FOR THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH: A Plan of Action
 Final Report of the Ontario Expert Panel on SARS and Infectious Disease Control
 April 2004