



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir



Faculty of Science and Health
**Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial
Sciences**

**Guidelines for Veterinary practice supervisors and
students while participating in clinical veterinary nursing
placements during Covid-19 period**

Context

The Work Placement manual for external supervisors and students contains a detailed description of what is expected from all parties during placements to ensure that this unique learning experience is as rich and beneficial as possible for students.

However, the main purpose of this document is to outline how we are adapting and innovating our approach to veterinary nursing placements during the unprecedented environment triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

TUS will endeavour to support students and partner placement agencies through placement during covid-19, by providing any additional supports, visits, zoom/team meetings and phone calls to meet the needs of the partner placement practices and the students. All veterinary nursing lecturers will be available to the partner placement practices and students throughout the duration of the placement. Students are allocated a designated academic placement co-ordinator while on placement. Aleks Mudracenko is the main point of contact email, amudracenko@ait.ie or phone no. 090 6468141, who will liaise with relevant veterinary nursing lecturers to deal with any queries/issues that may arise.

Resources

In monitoring the evolving situation surrounding COVID-19, TUS is guided by the information, advice and guidelines issued by the:-

- Irish Government
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Recourses and information informing the Institute's plans and protocols include:

Information on TUS Campus response Covid 19

- <https://www.TUS.ie/life-at-TUS/health-and-safety/covid-19>

The HSE Website – Information for public on COVID-19

- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus>

The HSE Website - Information for staff re COVID-19

- <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus-news/>

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre advice for healthcare workers during COVID- 19 pandemic

- <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/guidanceforhealthcareworkers/>

I am aware of COVID-19 symptoms Please see:

- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

Please note that advice may change - TUS students are advised to regularly check these websites.

Prior to Starting Practice Placement

All students will have undergone Hand Hygiene training and zoonotic disease transfer lectures.

Whilst, completion of placement is required in order to progress in a course, students should **NOT** go on placement if they:

- Have an underlying health condition that would put you at higher risk of serious illness.
- Have been identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID19 in the past 14 days.
- Are in self-isolation or restricting movement.
- Have symptoms that suggest they may have contracted COVID-19.
- Have tested positive for COVID-19 or other communicable infectious disease.

Supports available during Practice Placement

With Covid 19 we are all navigating uncharted territories. This uncertainty can generate some fears and anxieties. However, there are numerous supports available. An 'Open Door' policy within the Department of Life & Physical Science still applies to students on placement and any lecturer can be contacted by email as always if support is needed.

Our Counselling service is also available remotely to discuss any queries, concerns or anxieties.

Athlone IT <https://www.TUS.ie/life-at-TUS/student-supports/>

Other resources are available from the following sources:

- The Mindfulness Centre <https://mindfulness.ie/>
- Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/>
- HSE - Minding your mental health during Covid-19
- <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

Protocol if a Student becomes unwell during Practice Placement

Should a student develop symptoms during placement or while on site, they are required to take the following action immediately:

- Inform supervisor/manager
- Leave the site immediately, travel home and follow GP advice.
- If the student doesn't have a Private Car, students must be isolated from other people in the placement setting to reduce the risk of infection, contact a family member to travel home and Self-Isolate and follow medical advice.
- Follow the protocols/procedures of the placement organisation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: General Responsibilities and Commitments to Practice Placements

What our Partner Placement Agencies can expect from TUS

On behalf of Technological University, the Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences, has signed Practice Placement Agreements in place with each veterinary practice agency which agrees to provide veterinary nursing clinical placements. Students can only undertake placements in agencies which have signed the agreement. The agreement sets out the expectations the Institute has of agencies and the commitments the Institute will enter into during placement.

In addition to the information they receive, the Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences will designate an Academic placement coordinator. Their role is to mentor and assess the student regarding academic and assessment issues whilst on practice placement. In addition their role is to liaise with the staff members in the partner placement agency during the period of practice placement.

The Academic placement coordinator will also be available to the partner placement agency and to the student to help resolve, in a timely manner, any issues that might arise.

The Technological University Student Code of Conduct and Discipline will operate whilst the student is on practice placement. Any breaches of that code whilst on practice placement will be dealt with as per the guidelines in the practice placement handbook.

The Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences will provide training to *Practice Supervisors* or those particular staff members assigned the role of supervising students from day to day. This staff member will also assess the student's progress in achieving the standards of proficiency, as well as completing all necessary practice placement documentation.

The Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences will provide mandatory practice placement preparation learning for students, prior to practice placement. This will include ensuring that students are aware of policies and procedures regarding practice placement,

VPA (**VETERINARY PRACTICE ACT 2005, REVISED, Updated to 27 June 2017**), fitness to practice (part 7 of the VPA), supervision and the scope of practice placement assessment.

What TUS expects from our Partner Veterinary Practice Placement Agencies.

As part of the Practice Placement Agreement, the partner placement agency is required to commit to providing students on placement with learning supports including:

- Induction, Information, instruction, and supervision necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of the student whilst on practice placement.
- Covid 19 guidelines and procedures pertaining to their organisation.
- Relevant written policies, regulations and directives to the student.
- Appropriate student practice experience by assigning a Registered Veterinary Nurse, to provide support, guidance and supervision during practice placement. This person will participate in meetings with college representative and the student.
- Structured opportunities for learning and support to the student to carry out their practice placement portfolio for TUS.

The partner placement agency will also be expected to:

- Record student attendance on a weekly basis. The practice placement agency will notify TUS of any attendance issues.
- Advise TUS, on a timely basis, of any case of breach of discipline, health and safety incidents/accidents and/or support issues.
- Submit to TUS formal evaluations of the student's progress towards achieving the standards of proficiency whilst on practice placement.
- Treat students in accordance with TUS policies in relation to equality and diversity (practice placement handbook).

If a Practice Supervisor has concerns about a practice placement student's fitness to practise, they should inform the Academic placement coordinator or designate who will deal with this matter through the TUS *Fitness to Practice Policy* (Practice Placement Handbook).