

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
COUNCIL OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

**GUIDELINES FOR CLINICAL SITES  
RE STUDENT CLINICAL PLACEMENTS IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION  
FACULTY OF Medicine – Department of Physical Therapy**

The University of Toronto Health Sciences Committee on Emergency Preparedness (HSCEP) was formed in 2009 in anticipation of an H1N1 influenza pandemic. The principles established within that committee remain the same for any emergency situation. Although the central UofT website ([www.utoronto.ca](http://www.utoronto.ca) and [www.preparedness.utoronto.ca/home.htm](http://www.preparedness.utoronto.ca/home.htm)) will convey information for the general campus population, it is recognized that the relationship between UofT health science programs and their hospital partners is unique for health science learners.\* As such, information that is health science program-specific will be posted on the relevant program home pages noted below in item 13. Clinical sites are advised to check these pages regularly for updates.

For clinical sites that place University of Toronto (UofT) health science learners for varying periods of time at their sites, the following principles have been developed in order to assist clinical sites with decision-making relative to those learners and related issues in an emergency event.

- 1) If learners are required to be on site during an emergency event, the expectation is that these learners will be provided with the same level of personal protection, including protective equipment (PPE) that employees are receiving, in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its Regulations.
- 2) In a situation where a learner is not provided with the same level of protection as an employee(s), the learner is permitted and encouraged to choose to not continue with the clinical placement, and will be supported by the UofT in this decision. The student is required to inform the clinical site and his/her academic program of this decision as soon as possible.
- 3) Learners should not generally be excluded from participating during emergency and crisis situations as an integral part of training is to deal with emergencies and crises. Learners should be involved as much as possible in order to continue their clinical training or educational programs.
- 4) Participation in any educational endeavour will be allocated according to the competence of the learner and the assessment of risk of the situation by the clinical faculty or supervising clinician.
- 5) Entry-level learners may need to be restricted from clinical situations but, in consultation with the relevant Faculty / program, their placements could be modified to provide alternative experiences that will meet the Faculty's / program's learning objectives.
- 6) Advanced level learners should, as much as possible, participate in clinical settings similar to the roles they perform during non-emergency situations.
- 7) Graduate research students should be allowed to continue their laboratory or hospital-based research as appropriate to the crisis situation.
- 8) Support services for learners are available at the UofT. A student in need of support (emotional, financial, etc.) should be directed to the student support team (Graduate Coordinator, Vice Chair of Education and Director of Clinical Education) for the Physical Therapy program as listed in the Student Handbook at <http://www.physicaltherapy.utoronto.ca/our-community/students/handbook/>
- 9) A student who is unable to attend a scheduled placement due to transit or mobility disruptions, is required to advise relevant clinical sites and his/her academic program as soon as possible of the need to be absent from the placement as per the Department of Physical Therapy Clinical Practice Resource Manual
- 10) As much as feasible, the teaching faculty at clinical sites should continue to fulfill the goals and objectives of their education programs and teach around case opportunities that appear.
- 11) If a clinical site is unable to fulfill its educational program goals and objectives, opportunities for alternate means of delivery should be explored in consultation with the relevant program(s).
- 12) The Vice-Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions (RHCI), and the Dean, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, (or their designates) serve as the Co-Chairs of the HSCEP and the administrative contact is the Assistant Vice-Provost RHCI ([www.provost.utoronto.ca/committees/standing/healthscience.htm](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/committees/standing/healthscience.htm)),
- 13) As a first step, clinical sites with emergency health-related health science learner issues should access the relevant health science program website. The webpage and individuals to contact within the Physical Therapy program are the following: Dr Brenda Mori – [Brenda.mori@utoronto.ca](mailto:Brenda.mori@utoronto.ca) 416-946-8646

\* "learners" = students and trainees

Prepared by the HSCEP September 1, 2009 (adapted from HUEC documentation). Revised June 1, 2010. Revised further, September 6, 2016. Approved at HUEC, November 23, 2016