

# Practice Education Guidelines for BC Professional Behaviour of Students

GL#2-9

## Practice Guideline

March 22, 2007

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviour both in their demeanor and attire.

### Guideline Details

Professional behaviour is demonstrated by the student who:

- Follows Receiving Agency policies and procedures.
- Reviews and adheres to their chosen professions' practice standards and code of ethics (if applicable).
- Maintains professional boundaries.
- Adheres to the code of conduct policy of the Receiving Agency.
- Behaves in a manner that is not disruptive to patients and staff.
- Behaves in a respectful manner to colleagues, supervisors, patients and their families (refer to [Practice Education Guideline –Personal Conflict & Human Rights](#)).
- Maintains a professional appearance and adheres to the dress code, policy and/or guidelines of the Placing Agency and/or the Receiving Agency
- Clearly wears identification (refer to [Practice Education Guideline – Identification](#)).
- Introduces himself/herself as a student.
- Maintains confidentiality of information related to patients and the organization (refer to [Practice Education Guideline – Confidentiality](#)).
- Seeks permission from the patient or responsible staff before proceeding with an intervention (refer to [Practice Education Guideline –Consent for Student Involvement in Care](#)).
- Advocates for the rights of patients.
- Maintains attendance according to their placement schedule and Placing Agency expectations.
- Informs both the Placing and Receiving Agency, in timely manner, of any absence.
- Comes prepared and on time.
- Takes appropriate action to ensure the safety of patients, self, and others (refer to [Practice Education Guideline –Workplace Health & Safety](#))
- Practices under the supervision of a faculty and/or a designated Receiving Agency staff member (refer to [Practice Education Guideline –Supervision of Students](#)).
- Participates and contributes effectively as a team member in routine activities.
- Accepts responsibility and accountability for all relevant aspects of care and/or service within the limitations of the student role determined by the Placing Agency and the student supervisor (refer to [Practice Education Guideline –Student Scope of Practice](#)).

- Seeks regular performance feedback.
- Acknowledges and responds to constructive criticism, consulting with Placing Agency faculty and Receiving Agency supervisor.
- Provides constructive feedback to the Receiving Agency and the faculty regarding the clinical placement experience (refer to [Practice Education Guideline – Evaluation of Placement Experience](#)).
- Reports any incidents or unusual occurrences to faculty/supervising staff/manager following reporting procedures (refer to [Practice Education Guideline – Incident Reporting](#)).

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Placing Agency:

- Set policy related to student expectations and limitations.

Students and faculty:

- Seek out and implement both the Placing and Receiving Agency policies.

Receiving Agency:

- Set policy, including specific guidelines and/or expectations, for students.

Receiving Agency staff:

- Be clear in their expectations of students.
- Consult with Placing Agency faculty when there are concerns regard student professional behaviour.

### **Consequences of Non-compliance**

Unprofessional conduct\* or unsafe practice is unacceptable and may result in harm to patients and Receiving Agency staff. Ultimately, it may result in the student being asked to leave the practice education setting.

### **Rationale**

It is important that students understand that they are seen as representatives of their chosen profession, the Placing Agency from which they come from, and the Receiving Agency. People can form opinions of the profession, the Placing Agency or the Receiving Agency by the behaviour of one individual.

Professional boundaries are important to ensure that the relationship between a client and a health professional is both safe and beneficial. While a professional relationship will follow many everyday courtesies and social conventions, it is very different to an ordinary social relationship or friendship. This is due to the imbalance of power present in all professional relationships that may place the client in a position of vulnerability and put them at risk of exploitation and abuse. Crossing of professional boundaries may occur if a health professional is

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\* indicates term is defined under 'Definitions' section

under involved or over involved in a client's care, and includes extreme violation of a client's rights such as the pursuit of a sexual relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Receiving Agencies place a high value on appearance and behaviour. The reasons are rooted in professional values and beliefs as well as concerns for infection control, workplace health & safety, communication, and cultural sensitivity. The health professional by his/her demeanor and attire plays a fundamental role in establishing trust and confidence. Recent trends in clothing, body art, and body piercing may not be accepted by some patients. Students should consider the cultural sensitivities of their more conservative patients and present themselves in a manner that earns their respect, ensures their trust and makes them comfortable.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the ever-changing practice environments in most placement settings, all parties are encouraged to consult regarding student practice, behaviours, and related practice setting stressors. Consultation is a useful strategy to resolve practice and behaviour issues.

### **Definitions**

**Unprofessional conduct:** violation of policy or any other behaviour that is considered disrespectful, irresponsible, or unsafe.

### **References**

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<sup>1</sup> The State of Queensland (Queensland Health). (September, 2005). Student Health Professionals' Clinical Placement or Fieldwork Orientation – Student Expectations. Queensland Government, Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Offices of Student Services. (April 2006). Guidelines for Professional Dress for Medical Students. West Virginia University. Morgantown, West Virginia, USA.

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