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Introduction and Purpose

Quality practice education experiences depend on a collaborative and transparent process between the Health Care Organization (HCOs) and Post Secondary Institution (PSIs) partners.

PSIs have a contractual responsibility to students to provide quality learning experiences that enable completion of the necessary competencies and successfully complete their education program. HCOs also have a responsibility to support quality student practice education; however, HCOs overarching responsibilities are patient and staff safety and quality of care.

Decision making for student placements involves consideration of multiple factors, whose degree of priority changes depending upon contextual factors within the practice setting at the time of the placement request. There is no prescriptive formula for placement decisions. This is particularly relevant when the number of placement requests (demand) exceeds the number of available placement spaces (supply). Timing, volume, type of placement, practice site capacity for students, HCO health human resource needs and quality of educational programs are examples of contributing factors to final placement decisions¹. A transparent process that acknowledges this contextual basis for decisions is important to maintain trusting, collaborative working partnerships between PSIs and HCOs.

For further information, context and rationale for placement decisions, also refer to:

Practice Education Guideline Introductory Module:

http://www.hspscanada.net/docs/PEG/PEG_IntroModule.pdf

and

*Managing Practice Education in Healthcare in BC*²

<http://www.hspscanada.net/docs/managingpracticeeducation.pdf>.

The purpose of this guideline is to articulate the processes for submitting and responding to student placement requests. This guideline addresses the following types of students:

- Public Post Secondary Students
- Private Post Secondary Students
- Public Secondary Students receiving post secondary education
- Private Secondary Students receiving post secondary education
- Public/Private Post Secondary Students outside of BC but within Canada
- International Post Secondary International Students

The intent is to ensure accuracy, efficiency and transparency in all placement decisions.

¹BC Academic Health Council (2004). *Practice education survey final report: planning for sufficient & appropriate student placements for health professional students in BC*. Vancouver, BC. Page 33.

² BC Academic Health Council. (2013). *Managing practice education in healthcare in British Columbia*. Vancouver, BC: BCAHC. Available at: <http://www.hspscanada.net/docs/managingpracticeeducation.pdf>

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Definitions

Also refer to: Standardized Guideline definitions in Practice Education Guideline (PEG) Introductory Module.

Affiliation Agreement: a legal contract between the Health Authority and the Post Secondary Institution governing student placements by defining roles and responsibilities and addressing risks and liabilities. The AA uses a template supported by the BC Health Care Protection Program and the University, College, Institute Protection Program, Ministry of Finance.

Authorized Signatory: individual in the organization who is designated to sign legally binding contracts. Senior Administration and Finance usually identify these individuals. Front line managers are not usually authorized to sign off on contracts such as Educational Affiliation Agreements.

Practice Guideline Standards:

A current, signed Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement between the HCO and PSI must be in place before a student placement can be considered³. This document must be signed by an authorized signatory.

All placement requirements and processes stated and agreed to in the signed Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement will be met by both PSI and HCO partners. (See: Educational Institution Affiliation Agreement template, available at: www.hspscanada.net/docs/AAM/AA_Template.pdf)

All placement requests must be submitted:

- in accordance with the discipline/program placement request submission timelines. If there are no established timelines, placement requests must be submitted at least six (6) weeks in advance of the placement start date.
- Based on the exact number of placements required, i.e. the number of placement requests matches the number of students.
- with all required information, including:
 - Program information including course overview, outcomes/goals, course leader/contact;
 - Number of students;
 - Types of students including discipline and program year;
 - Type of experience required, for example, group, preceptor, observation, field etc.;
 - Dates, times and length of the experience;
 - Expectations of supervising staff for supervision and evaluation;
 - Other as required by HCO (e.g. resumes).

Due to high demand for placements in relation to capacity the following factors will guide the decision

³ BC Academic Health Council. (2007). *Education institution affiliation agreement template*. BC Academic Health Council: Vancouver, BC. Available at: www.hspscanada.net/docs/AAM/AA_Template.pdf

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making process:

- Practice site's ability to support the student(s), including such factors as staffing levels and physical site factors (eg: construction/relocation);
- Appropriateness of placement request to the practice area;
- Supervision needs of the student(s) and availability of competent HCO educators/staff (term includes all HCO practice education supervisory roles) or PSI educators to provide adequate supervision;
- Appropriate balance of staff and student ratios for the practice area and student competence;
- HCO sponsored/funded students: (eg: employee enrolled in specialty course or certification) take priority for placement;
- Geographic location of the Post Secondary Institution in relation to the HCO may be considered for disciplines where local demand exceeds capacity. Requests from PSIs within the local geographic region may be given priority, followed by requests from within BC, within Canada and finally International placements. Exceptions may include:
 - Unique placement experiences available in the HCO that are deemed mandatory by the Post Secondary Institution. For example, some disciplines require a rural placement for all students, therefore requiring a waiver on any geographic restriction.
 - Situations where a student lives in one geographic region but whose educational program is in another.
- Existing or projected HCO health human resource (HHR) needs;
- Learning opportunity that is only available in the HCO even if there is not an identified HHR need. For example: a community pharmacy student who requires an HCO experience to complete requirements of the educational program;
- Quality of the educational program, including accreditation status.

Public Post Secondary institutions are financially subsidized by the Provincial Government. Therefore, in situations where all other decision making factors are equal, students from Public Post Secondary Institutions will be placed before students from Private Post Secondary Institutions.

Remuneration for the purpose of achieving higher priority status for placement consideration and approval is not permitted. Placement requests must not be accepted or denied on the basis of financial or material incentives either offered by the PSI or requested by the HCO (See: PEG 2-5: Remuneration and Reimbursement).

PSIs are responsible for protecting student information in accordance with Federal and Provincial

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privacy legislation⁴ (See PEG 2-1: Protecting Privacy and Maintaining Confidentiality).

PSIs are responsible for confirming and maintaining records of student and faculty pre-requisite placement requirements including education, certifications and immunizations. Refer to Practice Education Guidelines:

- 1-5: Orientation - On-site Post Secondary Institution Educators
- 1-6: Orientation - Students
- 1-4: Respiratory Protection
- 1-3: Immunization

Every effort should be made to resolve concerns regarding any aspect of the placement process or practice education experience at the local level, with the acknowledgement and respect that both the placement requests and the final placement decisions have been made in accordance with the guidelines. Significant, unresolved concerns must be addressed in writing and forwarded to the PSI Director/Dean and the HCO Academic Director/Designate.

Post Secondary Institutions for out of Province and International students are responsible to ensure all requirements stated in the signed educational institution affiliation agreement and those required by the Health Care Organization are met prior to the start of the placement, including required documentation (eg: visas, permits, medical assessments), licensing, immunizations, criminal record checks, liability insurance and accident/disability insurance etc.

Any issues or concerns that arise while a current agreement is in place and are not satisfactorily resolved may result in the termination of the agreement by either party according to the terms outlined in the educational affiliation agreement.

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations:

Post Secondary Institution:

Confirm that an educational affiliation agreement is in place with the HCO where student placements are requested.

Comply with all requirements outlined in the educational affiliation agreement and any associated HCO specific student placement policies.

Designate a primary contact to arrange and conduct communication between the PSI and the HCO.

Ensure all requests are:

- submitted in accordance with established placement request protocols;
- appropriate to the practice area and student learning needs;
- based on the actual number of placements required.

⁴ Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. (2012). Available at:

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/LOC/freeside/--%20F%20--/Freedom%20of%20Information%20and%20Protection%20of%20Privacy%20Act%20RSBC%201996%20c.%20165/00/Act/96165_07.xml

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Ensure all faculty and student pre-requisite requirements are met and recorded prior to start of the practice experience; provide records if requested by HCO.

Health Care Organization:

Maintain accurate destination profiles to facilitate appropriate placement planning and requests by PSIs.

Confirm that an educational affiliation agreement is in place with the requesting PSI.

Designate a primary contact to arrange and conduct communication between the HCO and the PSI.

Use a transparent decision-making process for placement decisions.

Respond to the requests in accordance with the established timelines or within a reasonable timeframe to:

- allow for preparation/orientation of PSI educator prior to placement start date or alternatively,
- seek another placement should request be declined.

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, a HCO destination is not able to receive a previously accepted placement (e.g. unexpected unit/department closure, communicable disease outbreak, staffing changes), efforts will be made to collaborate with PSI partners to seek an alternative placement.

Confirm with PSI that all student and PSI educator pre-requisites are met. (See PEG 1-6: Student Orientation and PEG 1-5: PSI Educator Orientation).

Resources and References:

BC Academic Health Council (2007). *Educational institution affiliation agreement template*.

BCAHC: Vancouver, BC. Available at: www.hspscanada.net/docs/AAM/AA_Template.pdf

BC Academic Health Council. (2013). *Managing practice education in healthcare in British Columbia*. Vancouver, BC: BCAHC. Available at: <http://www.hspscanada.net/docs/managingpracticeeducation.pdf>

BC Academic Health Council. (2004). *Practice education survey final report: planning for sufficient & appropriate student placements for health professional students in BC*. Vancouver, BC. Available at: http://www.bcahc.ca/BCAHC_Placement_Survey_Final_Report.pdf

BC Practice Education Committee. (2009). *BC practice education affiliation agreements in British Columbia (BC). Frequently asked questions*. BC Academic Health Council: Vancouver, BC. Available at: www.hspscanada.net/docs/AAM/FAQ_Affiliation%20Agreements.pdf

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. (2012). Available at:

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/LOC/freeside/--%20F%20--/Freedom%20of%20Information%20and%20Protection%20of%20Privacy%20Act%20RSBC%201996%20c.%20165/00_Act/96165_07.xml

Private Career Training Institutions Agency. (2006). *Information guide*. Burnaby, BC. Available at: www.pctia.bc.ca

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Guideline Review History:

Revision #	Date	Author(s)	Brief Description of Change (reason for change)
Original	Feb 2007		
1	March 2013	All 2013 PEG WG Members reviewed.	Revised to new template Revised content to Post Secondary Institution students Aligned information with all other revised guidelines Removed affiliation agreement appendix and replaced with hyperlink to document on HSPnet Integrated relevant student category information to guideline Removed discipline specific placement processes to ensure guidelines address all discipline groups.