

UW SOP GUIDANCE FOR PRECEPTING STUDENTS DURING “COVID TIMES”

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect healthcare workers and how we care for our patients. During this time, we recognize that precepting students has become more complicated. For our students as future healthcare professionals, experiencing how these important changes in healthcare is an important part of their education and training. We are providing the following information and recommendations in support of our preceptors and students in practice.

In September 2021, we verified that all pharmacy students are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. We are also encouraging students to get the booster when they have reached 6-8 months from their initial vaccination.

REINFORCING ON-SITE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Our students completed basic training in COVID-19 precautions for personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical distancing. We encourage students to follow the policies and procedures at the practice site in which they are placed. Preceptors can help by ensuring students are oriented to these procedures and are provided the same instructions as employees, so that students can safely participate in patient care. The students are aware that it is their responsibility to perform symptom screening.

Just like in practice, our students are required to do the following when they are on campus:

- ✓ Self-assess for COVID-19 symptoms
- ✓ Follow appropriate physical distancing
- ✓ Wear face coverings, which are **required** while on campus ([Guidance on Facemask Use for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19](#))
- ✓ Sanitize the space before and after using it
- ✓ Record any meetings held for contact tracing purposes

NOTE: Several practice sites moved students to remote patient care when they first experienced COVID-19. Students enjoyed the experience and found virtual learning useful. **The School accepts remote patient care activities in place of in-person experiences.** With much patient care currently conducted remotely, student virtual/remote patient care reflects the reality of practice.

Moving to remote functions: Are students allowed to continue on site in APPE, IPPE, and WIP experiences during the COVID-19 health Crisis?

- **APPEs: Yes.** The nature of practice often involves telehealth and other remote work. If this becomes necessary, preceptors can move students to remote functions.
- **IPPEs: Possible, but not likely.** The IPPE experience is focused on accomplishing specific competencies, many of which cannot be demonstrated and experienced remotely. If a site can engage students in operational training during the pandemic, the training will continue as planned. If a site is unable to have students in the pharmacy due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will reschedule students instead of moving to remote work. Students will be rescheduled as soon as possible and in a way that does not delay progression to APPEs.
- **WIP1/WIP2: Yes, but not completely.** The goal of WIP is to introduce students to patient care responsibilities. When necessary, many activities of the WIP experiences can be accomplished remotely. Some WIP activities will require student presence at the site.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR ILLNESS OR POTENTIAL ILLNESS

If a student becomes ill

In the event of illness, the student should immediately notify their preceptor, the appropriate UWSOP EE program manager, and [UW Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EH&S), then consult their own care provider where needed. Students will work with the preceptor and UWSOP EE program manager to develop a make-up plan for the missed experience.

If a student is exposed to someone with COVID-19

In the event that a student is exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19, the student will need to quarantine per [health guidelines](#). As long as the student is symptom-free, they should plan to work from home during any necessary quarantine time. We want to make every effort to ensure that progress through the practice experience can continue despite quarantine. We encourage preceptors and students to discuss appropriate contingency plans for this possibility at the beginning of the experience.

In the event of illness or exposure, the site may require a negative COVID-19 test result prior to clearing the student for return to the site.

Recommendations for remote practice experiences:

- ✓ **Assign projects that can be done from home.**
- ✓ **Meet daily via Zoom (all UW students have a Zoom account) or phone**
- ✓ **Move to remote patient care functions (phone interviews, answering DI questions, patient care workup, remote team meetings, etc.). Students may need remote access to patient care records.**
- ✓ **Check out the Helpful Links section at the end of this document for more ideas on pivoting to remote functions.**

With the increase in virtual patient care and other work-from-home activities, many organizations now have greater flexibility to offer remote/electronic functions. We urge preceptors to investigate this possibility in advance.

ADMINISTRATION DECISIONS TO DISPLACE STUDENTS

We understand that when a surge in patient admissions for COVID-19 occurs, health system administration may dictate all non-essential personnel (e.g., students) be removed from the practice site. Such displacements are disruptive to a student's education and can impact their ability to graduate on time.

Our goal is for students to contribute to the work being done, whether it be in person or via remote functions. We recommend preceptors and students discuss this possibility in advance and determine a contingency plan.

Here are some strategies that our practice partners have adopted to support student practice learning that may be helpful in your planning:

- ✓ **Stagger student breaks, start, and stop times with staff**
- ✓ **Limit students to working in areas not exposed to COVID-19 patients**
- ✓ **Move students to remote functions (see recommendations for remote practice experiences)**

PLANNING FOR STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN

We have a few students in the precarious position of caring for their children while trying to complete practice experiences. We need to be inclusive of these learners and offer some grace for the difficult situation in which COVID-19 has placed them, should they need to quarantine or stay home to care for children who must quarantine at home away from school. We encourage students to reach out well in advance to plan.

Planning may include alternative scheduling and/or remote work in order to fulfill the requirements of the practice experience. If students who are parents can devote the time needed, we encourage preceptors to plan for activities that the student can do from home.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

HELPFUL LINKS:

- > [Child Care Options](#)
- > [Hand Hygiene](#)
- > [Code Response](#)
- > [UMass Remote Precepting Blog](#)
- > [Doffing PPE](#)
- > [WISC Experiential Learning Blog](#)
- > [Donning PPE](#)
- > [ASHP Remote Rotations Podcast](#)

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