



HSE Guidance on Clinical Placements in HSE Facilities and HSE Funded

Facilities from 1st September 2023

(Update Issued on 15th June 2026)

The HSE remains committed to working with key partners to support clinical placements to the greatest practical degree subject to the priority of protecting the safety of patients, staff and students. The education and training of undergraduate and postgraduate students in healthcare, allied health and social care disciplines within our model is based on a multi-stakeholder partnership involving patients, students, the higher education institutes (HEIs), the regulators of the professions and healthcare service providers including the HSE.

For the purpose of this document, clinical placement refers to unpaid clinical experience for healthcare, allied health and social care students whose presence is not specifically required to sustain service delivery. Students (for example 4th year nursing students) who constitute part of the workforce that sustain service delivery are in the same category as other healthcare workers. Those students who are paid members of the workforce are considered as staff members at work rather than as students on clinical placement.

Since 1st September 2023 the HSE accepts clinical placements for HEI students on the following basis:

Governance

A document should be agreed between the HEI and service that accommodates the clinical placement. The agreement may be at hospital, community area, unit, IHA level or HSE Health Region as suitable to the needs of the parties concerned. The document should address issues of legal liability in the event of alleged harm to students arising from their clinical placement and specific measures to manage risks of infection for patients, healthcare workers and students related to the clinical placements. Where such a document is already in place the partners should consider if a review is required in the context of changes and experience since last reviewed. There is a requirement for the HEIs to periodically review adherence to the agreed processes.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Requirements from HEIs

1. The HEI will provide an assurance that students and teachers/ educators have given undertakings as follows
 - that they will not present on clinical placement if they have any symptoms of acute infection such as symptoms of febrile respiratory tract infection or gastroenteritis
 - that they will not be present in clinical areas without a specific purpose related to their educational requirements
 - that when engaged in self-directed and unsupervised learning in clinical areas they should not form groups of more than 2 or 3 people
 - that they will limit unsupervised learning in clinical areas to defined areas or services (for example the team to which they are currently assigned)
 - that they will limit their time in the clinical area to the minimum time necessary for their learning. Students engaged in self-directed learning should move away from the clinical area for any extended group discussion of their learning

- that they will be compliant with hand hygiene and other IPC recommendations such as bare below the elbows/ bare above the wrist when in clinical areas
- that they will comply with IPC direction given by HSE staff when they are in HSE clinical areas
- that they will co-operate with requirements for management of outbreaks or other incidents of infection including providing samples for testing where required.

The format and the manner in which this undertaking is given is at the discretion of the HEI but may take the form of a written or electronic undertaking at the start of each academic year.

2. The HEI will provide an assurance that there is a pathway by which students and teachers/ educators can rapidly inform an appropriate person in the HEI in the event that they develop symptoms of or are confirmed to have a communicable infectious disease that may have implications for patients and staff who have recently been exposed to the students. The HEI will have a process for communicating this information appropriately to the relevant HSE service area.
3. The HEI will provide an assurance that clinical placements have been reviewed to ensure student(s) assignments to attend in clinical areas is limited to events/ times that are essential for student education.
4. The HEI will provide an assurance that it applies an agreed maximum number of students present in a clinical space for any supervised teaching activity. Generally, the number of people present at a bedside teaching session should be no more than six excluding the patient and any accompanying person (five students with one teacher/ educator). In certain settings where there is a requirement for a relatively large number of clinical staff (for example a surgical team, some procedures in the intensive care unit, delivery of a baby, ward round) the number of students should be limited to one or at most two in one operating room or one delivery room.
5. The HEI will provide an assurance that all students have completed the hand hygiene training module on HSeLand (mandatory for all staff working in healthcare on induction and every 2 years), have been assessed and certified as competent in the performance of hand hygiene in advance of clinical placement and have competence re- assessed at least once in each academic year (flexible process). Competence may be assessed by visual observation of performance of hand hygiene by an assessor with appropriate training, this can occur as a standalone assessment or as part of other assessments e.g. OSCE or similar.
6. The HEI will provide an assurance that all students have had appropriate IPC training in advance of clinical placement, to include but not limited to standard and transmission-based precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE). [The HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Prospectus of Quality and Patient Safety Education and Learning Programmes](#) contains details on the HSE AMRIC modules, CPD eligibility and the relevance to different categories of staff for each course. E-learning modules and training materials are available on the AMRIC Hub on HSeLand to all students and reflect the HSE approach to IPC and AMS (appendix refers). AMRIC are progressing accessibility to AMRIC eLearning modules for HEI tutors. HEIs are asked to encourage students to complete these modules as relevant to their discipline, and to consider including these modules as part of their curriculum for all healthcare students. A suite of additional IPC and AMS resources are also available on www.hpsc.ie

7. The HEI will provide an assurance that, where relevant, PPE training has been completed, including training on HSeLand and videos on www.hpsc.ie to ensure correct putting on and taking off of PPE.

8. The HEIs will provide an assurance that students in disciplines involved in prescribing, dispensing or administering antimicrobials will undertake education on antimicrobial stewardship. The EU council has identified antimicrobial resistance as one of the top three threats to public health. It is essential students understand both the impact of antimicrobial use on the development of antimicrobial resistance and the importance of appropriate use for treatment and prophylaxis of infection. By 2030 Ireland is tasked by the EU with reducing antimicrobial use by 27% as a key measure to address this threat.

9. The HEI will provide assurance that screening processes are in place for students undertaking exposure prone procedures and that published [Integrated Guidance on Health Clearance of Healthcare Workers and the Management of Healthcare Workers Living with Bloodborne Viruses \(Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV\)](#) is adhered to and implemented.

10. The HEI will provide an assurance that there is a process in place to ensure that students have been assessed to ensure that they have been offered immunisation, have been immunised and where appropriate (for example Hepatitis B virus) have been tested to ensure immunity to relevant infectious disease in line with relevant national guidance

11. Students who are not confirmed as immune to Hepatitis B virus may not engage in exposure prone procedures (Note refers).

12. HEIs should ensure that appropriate vaccination is promoted to all students who undertake clinical placements. The HSE will facilitate vaccination of students on clinical placement against Influenza virus and SARS-CoV-2 in line with vaccination programmes offered to staff. The HSE continues to recommend vaccination and booster vaccination against COVID-19 and annual Influenza vaccine to healthcare workers and healthcare students.

13. The HEI should provide an assurance that clinical placements have been reviewed to minimise the extent to which students move between multiple different healthcare or social care sites over a short period of time. It is accepted that in some cases attendance at different sites is required.

Moving from one placement site to another:

Students can move from a placement in one institution to a placement in another without an interval of time subject to the following:

- they do not have symptoms of febrile respiratory tract infection or other communicable infectious disease.

Note:

Where the student has fully cooperated with the required immunisation process but immunity to a specific infection cannot be confirmed (for example non-response to Hepatitis B vaccine) there should be an assurance that there is a process to manage the risk to patients and the student. Where a student has a chronic viral infection (for example HIV) there should be an assurance that there is a process in place to manage the risk to patients.

Appendix HSeLanD - AMRIC IPC and AMR eLearning modules and resources

HSeLanD - AMRIC IPC and AMR accredited eLearning modules*

1. AMRIC Introduction to Infection Prevention and Control and Antimicrobial Resistance
2. AMRIC Basics of Infection Prevention and Control
3. AMRIC Hand Hygiene
4. AMRIC Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions
5. AMRIC Personal Protective Equipment
6. AMRIC Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette
7. AMRIC Management of Blood and Body Fluid Spills
8. AMRIC Routine Management of the Physical Environment
9. AMRIC Aseptic Technique
10. AMRIC Antimicrobial Resistance and Multi Drug Resistant Organisms
11. AMRIC Healthcare-Associated Infections (HCAI): An Overview for Managers
12. AMRIC Outbreak – Prevention and Management
13. AMRIC Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis
14. AMRIC *Clostridioides difficile* Infection
15. AMRIC Antimicrobial Stewardship in Practice
16. AMRIC Prevention and Management of Urinary Tract Infection
17. AMRIC Prevention of Peripheral and Central Venous Catheter Related Infections
18. AMRIC The Basics of Microbiology and Surveillance
19. AMRIC IPC Risk Assessment
20. AMRIC The Role of the Registered Nurse/Midwife in Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS)
21. AMRIC Safe Use of PPE for High Consequence Infectious Diseases
22. AMRIC Hand Hygiene Auditor Training

AMRIC PPE videos available on www.hpsc.ie

- Putting on and taking off PPE in a community healthcare settings
- Putting on and taking off PPE in an acute healthcare settings

*These modules are available on the AMRIC hub on HSeLanD, and accessible by registering with HSeLanD, Irish Health Service's national online learning and development portal.

National antimicrobial prescribing guidelines and stewardship resources are available on www.antibioticprescribing.ie ENDS