

**Department of Nursing**  
**COVID-19 Prevention, Screening, Exposure, and Reporting for Clinical Courses**

**Policy**

This policy aims to define COVID-19 prevention and response actions for faculty and students in the Department of Nursing based on guidelines from the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC). As the knowledge of this virus evolves, transmission prevention, disease symptoms, and responses are subject to change; therefore, this policy is subject to change according to updated requirements or recommendations from the CDC, state and regional Health and Human Services, clinical agencies, CSU system, or Sonoma State University.

This policy applies to all students and faculty who are attending an in-person clinical or on campus experience as a component of Department of Nursing course work.

Prior to going to clinical or to campus faculty and students must complete a [SSU Wellness Check](#) as directed by Sonoma State University policy.

**Faculty and students are required to stay home if experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection to include:**

- Fever above 99.9 degrees Fahrenheit or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Faculty and students who have close contact (while unvaccinated), known COVID-19 exposure (while unvaccinated), are symptomatic for COVID-19, and/or test positive for COVID-19 will report this immediately to their assigned faculty member as soon as possible. Faculty will immediately notify the Chair of Nursing or designee who will notify risk management emergency services by emailing [covid.monitoring@sonoma.edu](mailto:covid.monitoring@sonoma.edu) or calling COVID Monitoring Hotline (707) 664-2684 (707-664-COVID).

Faculty and students are held accountable for truthful reporting during COVID-19 screening, and to fully cooperate with contact tracing should disease exposure or illness occur.

**Faculty and students are always required to follow infection control practices to include, wearing a mask during clinical or laboratory experiences and performing hand hygiene.**

- In the classroom, including the laboratory, students and faculty are required to always wear a mask unless new guidance is provided by university leadership.
- At the clinical site, faculty and students will strictly adhere to the specific procedures required by the healthcare agency, including the correct donning and doffing of personal protective equipment as warranted by a patient condition.

## **Procedures**

### **Contagion Prevention and Training**

**All DON students and faculty should:**

- Follow current state and local guidelines for masking and social distancing.
- Clean hands frequently, especially after any encounters with others or with objects potentially touched by others.
  - Wash with soap and water for at least 20-30 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer until completely dry.
- Sanitize commonly touched surfaces frequently.
- Avoid face touching when encountering others or objects potentially touched by others until handwashing can be done.
- Complete the COVID-19 vaccination series. Faculty and students who request medical or religious exemption and are not vaccinated will be required to complete regular COVID-19 testing as directed by clinical agency requirements, state and local requirements, and university policy.

**Please note:** If a clinical rotation assignment at a healthcare agency requires proof of COVID-19 immunization, nursing students who are not vaccinated and have a medical or religious exemption on file will be notified and removed from that placement. If there is no other clinical placement that will accept a student who does not have proof of COVID-19 immunization, the student will be instructed to withdraw from the course (both theory and clinical) and no other accommodation can be made. The ability of the student to complete their course of studies is not guaranteed given the increasing number of clinical placements now requiring COVID19 immunizations and the California Board of Registered Nursing regulations requiring nursing students to engage in direct patient care. The student may apply for readmission per SSU Department of Nursing policy.

## Wellness Screening

### At the Clinical Site

#### **Clinical faculty and students are responsible to do the following:**

- Complete the Wellness Check as required by the clinical agency prior to beginning clinical.
- Stay home if sick.
- If experiencing COVID symptoms, immediately initiate post-exposure procedures (see **Post-Exposure section**).

#### **Students are additionally responsible to do the following:**

- Self-report any symptoms of COVID-19 to the Department of Nursing as soon as possible.
- If illness symptoms develop or an exposure occurs during the clinical experience, take the following actions:
  1. Cease all patient encounters immediately.
  2. If clinical faculty is onsite, alert faculty immediately.
  3. If clinical faculty is off-site, notify supervising RN and leave the facility. Contact faculty immediately.
  4. Initiate post-exposure procedures (see **Post-Exposure section** below).
  5. Strictly adhere to any additional requirements directed by the clinical agency.

#### **On-site clinical faculty are responsible to do the following:**

Meet students before entering the healthcare facility to:

- Comply with any agency-specific screening requirements.
- Students cannot enter the building unless they have completed passed the screening process.
- Strictly adhere to any additional requirements directed by the clinical agency.
- If symptoms or an exposure occur at any time during the clinical day:
  - Initiate **Post-Exposure** procedures immediately.
  - Send a high importance email message or text to the Chair of the Department of Nursing.

#### **Off-site clinical faculty are responsible for the following:**

- Maintain regular communication with students.
- If alerted to a student with a potential exposure:
  - Instruct the student to initiate **Post-Exposure** procedures immediately.
  - Contact the RN supervising the student.
  - Strictly adhere to any requirements directed by the clinical agency.
  - Send a high importance email message or phone to the program director and/or the chair of the Department of Nursing.

## **On-Campus**

### **DON Laboratory and Classroom Infection Control Procedures**

- Complete the [SSU Wellness Check](#) screening assessment prior to entering the campus.
- Always wear a mask while indoors.
- Wash hands frequently as described above.

### **Post Exposure or COVID Symptoms**

Sonoma State University has detailed guidance for what to do if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19 or develop symptoms. Please see <http://covid19.sonoma.edu/> and click on “What to do if”.

### **Contact Tracing**

In the event of an exposure risk (unvaccinated) or if there is a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result for a student or faculty, the following steps will be taken.

- Faculty will contact the Program Director and Chair in a high importance email or by phone as soon as alerted to the exposure.
- The Chair of the Department of Nursing will work with the Sonoma State University COVID monitoring team to follow their policies for confirmed positive students or faculty.

### **Missed Course Time**

It is mandatory for students and faculty to remain home when sick. **This is the top priority.**

- Students should contact their assigned faculty regarding missed class, lab, or clinical time.
- Clinical faculty will consult with Program Director and Department Chair to establish a plan for missed clinical time with consideration for the DON policy for the allowed number of missed clinical hours. Faculty will do our best to assist students in making up hours and missed work; however, there is no guarantee that clinical and lab hours can be made up.