



**School of Nursing**

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| <b>Policy Area:</b> Undergraduate Program                   | <b>Subject:</b> Clinical Learning |
| <b>Title of Policy:</b> Student Reporting of Adverse Events |                                   |
| <b>Effective Date:</b> June 1, 2015                         | <b>Page Number:</b> 3             |
| <b>Approved Date:</b> May 25, 2015                          | <b>Approved by:</b> SON Council   |
| <b>Revision Date:</b> May 4, 2015                           |                                   |

**I. Policy Statement**

When an adverse event occurs in laboratory or clinical practice that involves a student, the first action is to follow the agency and/or university policy and to report adverse events according to the Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety policies and School of Nursing reporting.

**II. Reason for Policy**

The Canadian Nurses Association's Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (2008) was adopted by the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia and provides that nurses must admit mistakes. Although it does not specify that they must admit them to the patient, this can be inferred from the context. They must also take all necessary actions to prevent or minimize harm arising from an adverse event.

The Value of "Safe, Competent and Ethical Care" provides that: Nurses must admit mistakes and take all necessary actions to prevent or minimize harm arising from an adverse event. Nurses must strive to prevent and minimize adverse events in collaboration with colleagues on the health care team. When adverse events occur, nurses should utilize opportunities to improve the system and prevent harm.

A clear process for reporting and follow up of an adverse event involving a student that occurs during laboratory or clinical practice is needed to ensure students, clinical instructors and preceptors have clarity to report adverse events and minimize harm beyond agency expectations to the School. Clinical Instructors and students are responsible for knowing the protocol and guidelines within the agency, and the SON policy for reporting adverse events.

**Process**

1. The student must report any adverse event to the Clinical or Laboratory Instructor/Preceptor immediately.
2. All adverse events require reporting according to agency policy and School of Nursing policy.
3. In the event of a critical exposure, the student is required to follow the Dalhousie University Occupational Health policy and complete required forms as per University policy (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/documents-policies-procedures.html>). For a critical exposure incident there is a protocol for on-going medical follow-up, possible drug therapy and counselling and student health is available to provide this service for all nursing students.
4. In addition to completing Environmental Health and Safety required reporting, students must complete the School of Nursing Adverse Event report ([Adverse Events Form](#)). This will be discussed with the student and placed on in student's file with the laboratory or clinical evaluation.
5. Injuries that involve a critical exposure (Blood and Body Fluid) are followed up through the agency and/or Dalhousie University Environment Health and Safety (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/documents-policies-procedures.html>). For critical exposure in laboratory or clinical areas it is required that a **student report to the nearest Emergency Department (ER) within 2 hours**. Reporting of the exposure in ER may also require the completion of the additional forms that are beyond the scope of this policy.

**Definitions:**

**Adverse Event:** An event which results in unintended harm to the patient, and is related to the care and/or services provided to the patient rather than to the patient's underlying medical condition" (CPSI, 2008).

**Injury:** An injury may be any injury that occurs during laboratory or clinical practice (e.g. musculo-skeletal injury to the back or shoulder, body fluid exposure, needle stick injury).

**Sentinel Event:** An unexpected occurrence involving death or serious Sentinel Event physical or psychological injury, or risk thereof. Such events are called 'sentinel' because they signal the need for immediate investigation and response from all levels of the health care team (Joint Commission, 2006).

**III. Departments or Areas Affected By This Policy**

School of Nursing Clinical Agencies

Dalhousie University Student Health Department

#### IV. Responsibilities for the Implementation of this Policy

- All students enrolled in the BScN Program
- Faculty and staff in the School of Nursing

#### *Sequence of reporting*

1. Follow agency policy and work with the Clinical Instructor and Staff/manager of the assigned unit
2. Clinical Instructor reports to the Course Instructor
3. Course Instructor informs Associate Director Undergraduate Studies immediately if there is risk or injury or at the first business day if the situation is stable
4. Further action is taken with the Undergraduate faculty involved as needed to provide a safe environment for patients, students and faculty.
5. Consultation with the student as part of the debriefing and reflective practice aspects of the adverse event occurs at an appropriate time with the Clinical instructor and Course faculty and/or Associate Director.
6. Clinical Instructor provides adverse event reporting form with the final student evaluation

#### V. Web Address for Faculty of Health/School of Nursing Student Policies

[Student Policies](#)

[Adverse Events Form](#)

#### VI. Related Resources and References

Baker, G.R., P.G. Norton, V. Flintoft, R. Blais, A. Brown, J. Cox, E. Etchells, W.A. Ghali, P. Hébert, S.R. Majumdar, M. O'Beirne, L. Palacios-Derflingher, R.J. Reid, S. Sheps and R. Tamblyn. 2004. "The Canadian Adverse Events Study: The Incidence of Adverse Events among Hospital Patients in Canada." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 170(11): 1678-86.

Neudorf, K., Dyck, N. Darlene Scott, D. and Davidson Dick, D. 2008. Broadening the Patient Safety Agenda Nursing Education: A Catalyst for the Patient Safety Movement *Healthcare Quarterly*, 11(Sp) March 2008: 35-39.doi:10.12927/hcq.2008.19647

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| <b>University Policies and Documents</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Environmental Health and Safety link to all University policies and forms:<br><a href="https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/documents-policies-procedures.html">https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/documents-policies-procedures.html</a> |