

3 April 2020

Clinical workforce roles – offers from health services

As health services continue to respond to the impacts of COVID-19, medical schools are working with students and health services to clarify and support any roles for students in the health workforce response to the pandemic.

It is vital that all of us work together – medical schools, students and health services – to ensure that students contributing to patient care as part of a healthcare service have continued access to experiential learning and can progress to graduation as our next cohort of medical interns.

There has already been an incredible amount of work done by health services and medical schools to adapt clinical placements and develop new embedded learning objectives for roles undertaken by medical students within hospitals and community-based care during the COVID-19 crisis.

We have had reports that students have begun to receive offers of paid and unpaid work from some health service providers. This direct approach can create confusion and anxiety amongst students, who are not sure whether it is appropriate for them to accept such roles and how they fit within their learning needs.

Should you be contacted directly by a health service or clinician about a role in the health workforce, please take the details straight to your clinical coordinator at your medical school.

By taking these and other offers to your medical school, you will get the right advice on how you can contribute to the health workforce in a way that supports your learning outcomes:

- Your school will be able to advise on whether the role being offered is suitable for your level of experience and the stage you are at in your medical program, and whether it will support your progression through your medical program.
- Your school can work directly with health service providers to help ensure that you have the right supervision for the role being offered, and that your student learning outcomes will be protected.
- They will be able to provide support to ensure any workforce role has the appropriate conditions and safeguards (e.g. indemnity insurance).
- It is also important to ensure that there are the appropriate student support services in place and accessible to you.

- Your school will ensure you are properly prepared for the role including any specific training that might be required, and support you in understanding how to ensure you have access to PPE if, and when, required.

To assist both health services and students, Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand has published a set of [principles¹](#) to guide and support discussions and decisions on student contributions to the health workforce during COVID-19. These principles provide essential information for any health service.

For your information, Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand has contacted the Chief Medical Officer in each jurisdiction requesting their support that health services liaise with medical schools on any workforce roles for their students, rather than contacting students directly.

Should you need any further information on this matter, or would like to discuss the issue, **please contact your school's MedSoc.**



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¹ https://medicaldeans.org.au/md/2020/03/2020-March-20_principles-for-medical-student-roles-in-COVID-19-health-workforce.pdf
