



# Medical Student Policies and Guidelines

## COVID-19 Testing Guidance

COVID-19 testing is now readily available with rapid turnaround times. The SARS CoV2 PCR test is a diagnostic test which is done with a nasopharyngeal swab and looks for viral RNA. A positive test most likely indicates current (active) infection. You can be PCR positive for COVID-19 both with and without symptoms. Antibody testing, also referred to as serologic testing, is a blood test that looks for evidence of past infection.

Tests will be ordered for students if deemed appropriate by provider (including Student Health). Our recommendations for antibody and PCR testing have been made using guidance from state, city, and hospital guidelines and policies.

**Antibody testing** We encourage all students to get antibody testing as soon as possible. Testing should be done through the Mount Sinai Health System, using the FDA authorized Mount Sinai antibody test. While the hope is that a positive antibody provides some measure of immunity, even if you have a positive antibody you should still assume you could get infected and you must wear appropriate PPE. Antibody testing will end on June 26, 2020.

**Symptom monitoring and PCR testing** All students are required to monitor their temperature and symptoms daily. Students must stay home if they have a fever  $> 100$  or any symptoms associated with COVID-19. If they are symptomatic, they may contact their PCP or student health, and they will have access to a SARS CoV2 PCR testing if appropriate. Any student who is SARS CoV2 PCR positive will be linked to appropriate medical follow up and be instructed on specific infection prevention guidance. The in-house Sinai PCR test has a same-day turnaround time. This will allow students to return to the clinical arena after mild symptoms with a COVID negative test. Note that students with a fever from any cause will still have to stay home for 72 hours without a fever.

We will be rolling out an online symptom checker and guidance on when and how to use the symptom checker soon.

## Reporting an Illness

It is really important that students support a healthy learning environment and this means no student should report to class or clinic when feeling ill. Make-up work will be determined by the course and clerkship director and efforts to provide remote learning are underway.

A revised absence reporting process will be introduced prior to the start of the academic year.

## Involvement in Patient Care

As a school, we have determined that returning to the clinical environment is critically important at this stage of your training. COVID-19 and infections like it are our 'new normal'. They will be part of your residency training and clinical practice. The patients and communities under your care will rely on you to provide them with safe, compassionate, data-driven care, and the best time to learn to do this well is during medical school, with appropriate supervision and PPE. As was the case in the early years of HIV/AIDS, it is so important that we embrace this challenge and ensure that every patient, no matter their circumstances or infection status, receives the best possible care. We are also committed to ensuring your safety as you

care for patients and to that end, have detailed our approach to your safety and protection further in this document.

**Year 1 and 2** Medical students in Years 1 and 2 can participate in some clinical activities. This participation is contingent on successfully completing required compliance training and the availability and utilization of the proper PPE as dictated by the patient situation or clinical procedure.

#### ASM Year 1

- ASM Year 1 students with proper PPE may see non-COVID patients in specified ASM Year 1 clinical sites (inpatient and ambulatory) - ASM Year 1 students should not participate in the care of patients in the Emergency Department - ASM Year 1 students should not participate in any aspect of the care of COVID-19 patients and those persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 infection.

#### ASM Year 2

- ASM Year 2 students with proper PPE may see non-COVID patients in specified ASM Year 2 clinical sites (inpatient, ED and ambulatory) - ASM Year 2 students should not participate in any aspect of the care of COVID-19 patients and those persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 infection.

All learning and assessment activities with SPs are virtual.

Shadowing clinicians is an important activity and contributes to learning, career development, and the ability to identify mentors.

- Year 1 students may see non-COVID patients with proper PPE, should not participate in the care of patients in the Emergency Department, and should not participate in the care of COVID-19 patients and those persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 infection.
- Year 2 students may see non-COVID patients with proper PPE, and should not participate in the care of COVID-19 patients and those persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 infection.

**Year 3 and 4** Medical students in Year 3 and Year 4 clerkships may fully participate in all clinical activities. This participation is contingent on successfully completing required compliance training and the availability and utilization of the proper PPE as dictated by the patient situation or clinical procedure. These patient situations and/or clinical procedures include:

- Caring for COVID-19 patients and those persons under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 infection. **Students however, should not be first-line providers for any of these patients.** (A first-line provider is the initial person to be contacted by the patient care staff for any questions, concerns, issues requiring an immediate or urgent response.)
- Access to all clinical training sites including inpatient, ED and ambulatory clinics
- Access to units or treatment areas where COVID-19 is considered to be endemic with regularly occurring aerosolizing procedures (e.g., ED, ICU, L&D, OR) - Supervised presence at aerosol-

generating procedures for PUI or COVID-19 patients (e.g., tracheal intubation, noninvasive ventilation, tracheostomy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, bronchoscopy)

- Presence at all clinical elective sites

**Restrictions on student participation in clerkship activities are dictated by supervision guidelines and clerkship objectives.**

## Training

Students will be required to complete all Infection Prevention training modules through the annual compliance process. Additional training in proper donning and doffing of PPE will occur prior to starting the clinical rotations: during clerkship orientations for students for Class of 2021 and during InFocus 5 for those students in Class of 2022.

## PPE at Sites

Ensuring that our students have access to appropriate PPE is a major driver in achieving our goal of ensuring the quality and safety of our students' learning experience. In discussions with health system leadership we have received assurance that adequate PPE will be available at all clinical care sites. Students should follow site specific guidelines.

Here are the institutional guidelines for PPE usage.

<https://www.mountsinai.org/files/MSHealth/Assets/HS/About/Coronavirus/MSHS-COVID-19-PPE-Practices.pdf>

No member of a clinical team should ever be expected to provide care without adequate PPE. Lack of access to PPE is a 'never event'. We have compiled a list of contacts at each site that students can turn to for PPE should an unexpected gap in access occur. This contact list will be included in the medinfo.mssm.edu app once it has been completed.

## Guidelines for Safety and Emergency Kits

Part of ensuring the safety of our students involves providing students with the appropriate supplies as they travel through the health system and participate in educational activities. Safety and Emergency Kits will be distributed to all students entering the clinical environment.

### *Safety Kit*

Safety kits include standard, reusable items for infection prevention. Each kit includes:

- Plastic box with a sealable lid to store items used in the clinical environment (such as medical equipment or shoes)
- A thermometer
- Personal refillable hand sanitizer
- Face covering

### ***Emergency Kit***

Emergency Kits are ONLY for use in the rare situation when a student is at a site and there is no PPE available for a patient interaction that requires PPE. Per the above section on PPE at Sites, we have received assurance that adequate PPE will be available at all clinical care sites. In case of an emergency if a PPE item is not available, the Emergency Kit will allow a student to continue their learning experience safely. Each kit includes:

- Face shield
- Isolation gown
- Booties
- Goggles
- N95 mask (Students MUST keep the N95 mask used during their mask fit and include it as part of their Emergency Kit).

These emergency kits MUST be brought by students to their clinical training sites every day. In the event that a student cannot procure the proper PPE at the clinical site on a specific day, the student will:

- Utilize one or more items from the Emergency Kit
- Report this instance of utilization of items in the Emergency Kit that day to **PPE: Break the Glass!**

As a result of submitting a report, the Clinical Curriculum Team will:

- Investigate and review this compliance issue and report to Medical Education leadership for follow-up.
- Replenish a student's *Emergency Kit* supplies

If a student needs to access any PPE items from their emergency kit, they must report this utilization through the above reporting process. Any items used, including the N95 mask, will be replenished as needed once a student has reported.

## **Safety in the Clinical Learning Environment**

We are committed to the safety of our students in the clinical learning environment. If students have any concerns about safety or safety protocols at their clinical training sites, they should contact [clerkships@mssm.edu](mailto:clerkships@mssm.edu)

## **Transportation Guidelines**

In the setting of COVID-19, every form of transportation carries some risk of transmission. Our goal is to mitigate that risk by adhering to face coverings, social distancing, and good hand hygiene, regardless of how we travel from place to place. Based on all available evidence, it is also unclear what the relative risk is of public transportation vs. shuttles vs. shared ride programs.

While public transportation is currently considered a safe option, as of 6/9/20 and per statewide Phase 1 guidelines, our plan for the coming months will include the following:

- Continued use of a shared ride program
- Enhanced health system shuttle buses
- Additional shuttles through the Department of Medical Education to specific sites and at times that map to clerkship start and end times.

We are working on the details of this plan and will have additional information prior to the start of clerkships. As clinical and public health circumstances in New York City evolve in the coming months, we will keep you updated on changes to these plans.

## **Scrubs Policy**

Currently, students will receive 1 credit for scrubs/day. We are working with the Linens Department to increase this to 2 credits for scrubs/day and will notify you when this change occurs.

Scrubs must be returned to the scrub machines before securing another set. Scrubs are not required in all clinical environments and will be issued in the appropriate clerkships.