



CAA – Ambulance Education Committee

Clinical Placement Guidelines for Higher Education Paramedic Programmes

Background:

Currently, the number or type of clinical training hours in higher education paramedic programmes is not specifically prescribed or mandated. All universities provide clinical placements with a significant variation in total hours across individual programmes. It is each paramedic programme provider's responsibility to ensure adequate clinical placement experience is available for every paramedic student.

Clinical placements are considered an essential component of paramedic education. Placements equip students with opportunities for: integration of skills and clinical decision-making; the development of communication skills and team building; and socialisation and familiarisation with the profession.

Definition:

A *clinical placement* is defined as any arrangement in which a paramedic student is present in an environment that provides healthcare or related services to patients or the public. The placement can occur across the whole spectrum of healthcare services. It has the following elements:

- it occurs in the usual place of care or service provision (wherever & whatever that is);
- there is a patient or client present; and
- there is a mentor or clinical supervisor present.

Specifically, an *ambulance clinical placement* occurs as part of the service provision of an ambulance service within Australia or New Zealand. This may be within emergency operations, non-emergency operations or support areas and services.

An *international ambulance clinical placement* occurs within an ambulance service outside of Australia or New Zealand.

Minimum Clinical Placement Hours:

The Council of Ambulance Authorities Ambulance Education Committee (AEC) recommends that a minimum of 600 clinical placement hours should be included in a higher education paramedic programme. The settings for these placement hours are:

- a) 300 hours minimum within an Australian or New Zealand emergency ambulance service; and
- b) 300 hours across a range of relevant alternative clinical settings. These may include non-emergency patient transport, overseas ambulance placements, hospital placements or aged and community care placements.

Acknowledging the value of contemporary educational initiatives, structured clinical simulation may be included within the alternative clinical hours, equivalent to a maximum of 100 hours total duration.

There is an expectation that clinical placements will afford a student the opportunity to participate in supervised clinical care, not simply in an observational capacity.

