Students’ Rights & Responsibilities for Non-Clinical Field Placements: COVID19 Pandemic

All University of Delaware students who are going into a non-clinical (i.e., non-health care) field placement during the COVID19 pandemic have rights and will be treated fairly whether or not they choose to enter into the placement; but they also have a responsibility to adhere to guidelines of their respective academic program if they do choose to enter into the placement. The rights and responsibilities listed in this document are specific to the current circumstances of the COVID19 pandemic and are in addition to the typical rights and responsibilities a student would have going into any non-clinical field placement.

Student Rights

The University is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under local, state and federal law. All students have the right to defer their field placements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The University will work with students who elect to defer their field placements to help them complete their academic requirements in an efficient way. Deferring a field placement may delay graduation. In order to determine whether they should defer their field placements, students should be aware of the following:

1. There is a risk of contracting COVID-19 while in a field setting. The most effective way to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 is by engaging in measures recommended by the CDC including ensuring physical distancing, requiring everyone to wear cloth face masks, increasing sanitization of frequently touched surfaces, and having everyone complete a health screening questionnaire and only allowing those who do not have symptoms and have not been exposed to someone who is COVID-19 positive to enter the site. Even when these measures are in place, there is still a chance of contracting COVID-19.
2. COVID-19 affects people in different ways, but generally the symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, difficulty breathing and a new loss of the sense of taste and sense of smell.
3. Even young, healthy individuals may experience serious consequences from COVID-19 including hospitalization, the need for a ventilator and potentially death. Individuals with pre-existing conditions may be at greater risk for serious complications from COVID-19 including death. Students should consult with their treating physician if they have pre-existing health conditions or any questions about their individual risks regarding COVID-19.

In addition, to promote a safe and healthy non-clinical field experience during this pandemic, if students voluntarily choose to participate in their field placement at this time, they have the right to:

1. Expect that the training site for their field placement adheres to all applicable federal, state and local laws, as well as CDC guidance, concerning safe operation during this pandemic.
2. Ensure personal safety within the field placement site and have access to site-specific information that can reasonably inform such decisions regarding personal safety.
3. Communicate concerns regarding safety practices at a given site to the Department/School course instructor and/or field placement coordinator such that action
and/or resolution can occur in a timely fashion. Interruptions in matriculation will follow established program policies that govern interruptions or disruptions in timely progression.

4. Choose to participate, refuse or terminate placement at an assigned field placement site which they feel is a danger to their personal safety. Students may defer placement altogether until a later date for personal health and safety reasons (including family/household member issues). Students will not incur academic penalty or adverse action if the refusal or self-termination decision occurs while in good academic standing (prior to or during the experience) for reasons directly related to maintenance of personal safety.

5. Re-assignment at a different field placement site as permissible by program policy and procedures in qualifying situations as noted above. All effort will be made to resume the practicum experience at another site. Students must understand that while every effort will be made for rapid return to a field placement, refusal and/or termination may delay matriculation and/or graduation.

Student Responsibilities

All University students have the responsibility to:

1. Be aware of the manner in which COVID-19 is transmitted and take appropriate steps to minimize the risk to themselves, their co-workers and their clients.
3. Be aware of the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and their eligibility to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, as well as any risks associated with the vaccine.
4. Provide maximal safety to those at their field placement site by adhering to the highest level of physical distancing, travel restrictions and pathogen risk reduction when not at their field placement site.
5. Disclose any travel that potentially jeopardizes the intent of physical distancing guidance.
6. Adhere to Centers for Disease Control guidelines for protecting yourself and others.
7. Immediately communicate concerns regarding safety practices at a given site to their department/school’s course instructor and/or field placement coordinator.
8. Report to the Department/School course instructor and field placement coordinator if they have COVID-19 symptoms and/or have been exposed to persons with COVID-19, whether in the placement setting or other environment. If this occurs, students should follow the current public health department protocol for COVID-19 exposures which may require the student to quarantine.
9. Comply with all applicable policies, procedures, and rules of the placement site/facility, including those temporarily in place due to the pandemic, which may include pre-screening for fever and other symptoms prior to entering the placement site/facility.
10. Make arrangements for a location where the student can self-quarantine for 14 days if potentially exposed to COVID-19.
I have read this statement of Students’ Rights & Responsibilities for Field Placements: COVID-19 Pandemic and understand the information conveyed in it. I have raised any questions I have prior to signing.

Please initial one of the options and then sign below.

_____ I wish to defer my field placement.

_____ I wish to move forward with my field placement at this time. I understand the risks associated with being in a field setting at this time and understand I may withdraw from my placement as outlined above.

__________________________________
Signature

__________________________________
Printed Name

__________________________________
Date