



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



National Ambulance Service (NAS)
Workforce Support Policy
Experimental Placements/ Observers

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1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 The National Ambulance Service (NAS) is committed to the safe transport of all staff, patients and any third parties on its vehicles. This policy applies to any individual travelling as a third party observer on any of the Service's vehicles or visiting an Ambulance Control Centre.
- 1.2 The NAS recognises the educational support it may occasionally be in a position to offer other statutory and voluntary services and, where practicable, may assist with work experience opportunities to assist students from the statutory and voluntary services in the transition from education to practice.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The NAS frequently receives requests from educational and clinical colleagues as well as statutory and voluntary services to accompany ambulance staff to observe and experience their working environment.
- 2.2 The NAS is committed to facilitating this wherever it is reasonable and appropriate as a means of increasing awareness of the difficult and demanding role of a modern Ambulance Service, for the purpose of increasing collaboration and understanding between clinical and educational colleagues as well as constituent members of the statutory and voluntary community and where appropriate as an aid to recruitment.
- 2.3 This Policy is necessary to:
 - A. Facilitate the placement of observers
 - B. Ensure the effective management of placements
 - C. Recognise the duty of care placed upon the NAS by supporting such practice
 - D. Recognise the potential for litigation if not managed appropriately
 - E. Minimise the risk to the NAS and observers when conveyed in NAS vehicles.
 - F. To protect the patient's right to confidentiality
 - G. Promote a consistent approach to this throughout the NAS
 - H. Maximise the learning experience for observers/students whilst on experiential placement
 - I. Define the responsibilities of those involved with organising and supervising experiential placements
 - J. Ensure the NAS's reputation and standards are maintained when accommodating work placement students

- 2.4 The NAS takes a structured approach to the benefit of encouraging observers to accompanying NAS staff where clear benefits can be defined.
- 2.5 By adopting this policy and taking an active part in its implementation the NAS will ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to ensure the safety of patients, staff and observers and those resources are used for their intended purpose.
- 2.6 The policy describes the NAS's control measures for reducing risk to any third party ambulance observers.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all Managers, Supervisor and Staff in the NAS.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all experiential placements within the NAS where requests are received to accommodate members of voluntary and statutory organisations that contribute to the operational capacity of the NAS. Such organisations include the Fire and Rescue Services, An Garda Síochána, Irish Coastguard, Defence Forces, HSE personnel and members of voluntary emergency services.
- 3.3 This policy may also apply to visiting members of appropriate educational and healthcare professions who wish to experience the operational setting of the NAS
- 3.4 No third party will be allowed engage in direct patient care unless expressly approved by the Medical Director.

4.1 LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- A. National Ambulance Service Parent Safety Statement

5.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Experiential Placements can be defined as “a placement on an employer’s premises in which a student carries out a range of tasks or duties, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience”.

6.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.2 OBSERVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.2.1 To demonstrate a genuine interest in the various work activities of the NAS.
- 6.2.2 To comply with the NAS's policies and procedures as communicated to them and in particular, comply with all Health and Safety regulations.
- 6.2.3 To abide by any reasonable instructions given by NAS staff and not participate in any activities where it may place the student, the mentor, a patient or any other individuals at risk.
- 6.2.4 To maintain an acceptable attitude and standard of behaviour and appearance, to ensure that the NAS's reputation and standing is not brought into disrepute.
- 6.2.5 To maintain absolute confidentiality and discretion in respect of patients details/and work carried out in relation to any patient during the experiential placement and during any consequent discussions on their experience. This will be in the form of a written agreement, to be signed by the student.
- 6.2.6 To make the best possible use of the time allocated to them by listening, observing, questioning and participating in work activities where possible. Notes may be taken provided these do not record the names and/or details of patients or NAS employees.
- 6.2.7 Any course work related to the experiential placements such as case studies, including follow-up to determine patient outcomes, will be completed in line with guidelines from the recognised training institute/third level College/University and will contain no patient or NAS staff identifying information.
- 6.2.8 Relevant course documentation such as log books may be utilised but will be anonymised in relation to both patients and NAS staff encountered.
- 6.2.9 To provide a written assessment (see Appendix VI) of what they had learned, what worked well, what did not work well and how this contributed positively to their current position and objectives
- 6.2.10 Where the Observer is on placement as part of a PHECC Accredited EMT Training Programme, they must act at all times in accordance with the PHECC Code of Conduct

6.2 LINE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.2.1 Each Senior Manager will ensure that each Manager, Supervisor and Staff member is aware of and understands this Policy.
- 6.2.2 It is the responsibility of the relevant Manager to implement and support this Policy and to supervise the operation of the enclosed Procedures.
- 6.2.3 The Operational Support and Resilience Manager has overall day-to-day responsibility for the safe and secure transport of any third party observers.
- 6.2.4 To assist in the interpretation of this Policy to students and their parent organisations.
- 6.2.5 To be aware of and understand their responsibilities under this Policy and to brief the student on all relevant matters
- 6.2.6 All NAS Staff must facilitate placements by NAS Students or Peers as per the PHECC Code of Professional Conduct
- 6.2.7 In relation to non NAS personnel, Paramedic Supervisors should identify staff in their location that are best placed to facilitate Experiential Placements/Observers. It is expected that the majority of NAS staff are well placed to do so
- 6.2.8 To be responsible for the health and safety of the student and not expose them to any undue risks. In the event of any accident or injury, ensure that the incident is dealt with in accordance with the Quality and Risk Incident Management & Reporting Policy. In this regard, Observers from PHECC accredited organisations should utilise their respective PPE. Such PPE must match the requirements of protection offered by NAS issued PPE.
- 6.2.9 To complete evaluation forms as required, following the placement.
- 6.2.10 To ensure that the standards of service provided by the NAS are maintained and are not adversely affected by accommodating the student. Any problems or adverse behaviour by the student should be reported to the Students Parent Organisation immediately.

6.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDUCATION AND COMPETENCY ASSURANCE TEAM

- 6.3.1 To act as a central point of contact for any organisation seeking access to experiential placements
- 6.3.2 To co-ordinate experiential placement opportunities within the NAS.

- 6.3.3 To liaise with the student's parent organisation regarding any issues with the student. In the event that it becomes necessary and appropriate, the NAS reserves the right to terminate the placement immediately.
- 6.3.4 To assist in the interpretation of this Policy to other managers and students, ensuring each is aware of their responsibilities.
- 6.3.5 To provide support to managers to enable them to carry out their responsibilities under the policy.
- 6.3.6 To advise students and their parent organisations that Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance is their responsibility and must be complied with before the placement can begin.

7.1 PROCEDURE

7.2 CRITERIA FOR OBSERVERS TO THE NAS

- 7.2.1 Observers will normally only be facilitated if they are employed by the HSE or the Statutory Services, or are members of the Voluntary organisations (where the parent organisation forms part of the NAS operational capacity) or are registered students of a third level institution (University) following a relevant course of studies. Relevancy of study will be considered by the Medical Directorate in association with the Educational and Competency Assurance Team.
- 7.2.2 Overseas visiting observers, including medical, nursing, or paramedical personnel may be facilitated with observer placements on receipt of the following:
 - A. Written request from their employer identifying the individual as a professional medical, nursing or pre-hospital professional.
 - B. Approval for the observer placement must be given by the Area Performance Manager.
 - C. Confidentially declaration (appendix V) must be signed by the observer before placement begins.
- 7.2.3 In all other requests, the following criteria must be achieved / demonstrated in order for the NAS to consider an application for an individual to travel with/or observe NAS staff:
 - A. Observers must be over 18 years of age.
 - B. Observers will need to specify the reason for their request
 - C. The objectives must be clearly specified and defined
 - D. Observers from the Voluntary Services should be undertaking the placements as part of a PHECC accredited course at NQEMT level
 - E. The observer must have approval from their employer/organisation or educational institution

- F. The observer must be covered by an Employer's Liability (€13.0 million)/Public Liability (€6.4 million) Insurance Policy which specifically indemnifies the HSE
- G. A copy of the relevant policies must be provided

7.3 REQUEST PROCEDURE FOR OBSERVERS TO THE NAS

- 7.3.1 Requests will normally be considered from personnel with a legitimate and beneficial reason to observe e.g. nurse trainee, medical students, Emergency Department staff, nurses working in Primary Care, Student EMTs with Voluntary Organisations, Defence Forces, Irish Coastguard, An Garda Siochana or the Fire Service.
- 7.3.2 Any person making a request directly to Stations by telephone or in person will be advised to make a formal request in writing to an Education and Competency Assurance Officer.
- 7.3.3 Written requests must come from the observer's employer/voluntary organisation or educational institution and must specify the following:
 - A. The name of the person*
 - B. Name of the employing organisation or voluntary organisation
 - C. Date of attendance and duration of the visit
 - D. Which locations they wish to visit / start duty
 - E. Why they are attending
 - F. What they want to achieve
 - G. Next of Kin contact details
 - H. Copies of relevant insurance policies as per Section 7.1.2 (F)

* Where an organisation seeks placements for a number of students the form attached at appendix VII may be used.
- 7.3.4 Following the receipt of the written application request the Education and Competency Assurance Officer will respond in writing with a letter of authority (Appendix III); pro-forma return (Appendix IV); and confidentiality agreement (Appendix V).
- 7.3.5 The Education and Competency Assurance Officer will liaise with the relevant Supervisor or Manager to ensure the necessary planning arrangements are undertaken to facilitate the period of observation.
- 7.3.6 Observers must not commence any period of observation unless:
 - A. The pro-forma has been signed and returned by the employer/voluntary organisation to the relevant Manager.

- B. The Observer's check list (Appendix II) has been completed at the commencement of the shift by the supervising staff.
- C. All observers must complete a confidentiality agreement and carry their ID at all times. Where possible, patient's approval must be sought and obtained before their treatment can be observed. This should be done by expressed and documented consent.

7.4 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE

- 7.4.1 All observers must work under the direction of their Supervisor/ Crew and will not actively treat patients unless it is identified as part of the objectives set out in the request letter, and they are qualified and authorised by the Medical Director to do so.
- 7.4.2 Observers will not drive the NAS vehicle. Seat belts must always be worn whenever observers are in a moving ambulance vehicle.
- 7.4.3 Observers from PHECC CPG accredited organisations will utilise Personal Protective Equipment approved by their parent organisation. This PPE must meet the standards required for NAS PPE issue.
- 7.4.4 Observers not from PHECC CPG accredited organisations will be provided with a hi-visibility jacket and helmet and must wear them whenever requested by the crew.
- 7.4.5 To comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, (2005), all visitors to any NAS premises should be given a tour of the premises to ensure they are fully aware of the Fire Exits, Assembly Points and any other relevant issues related to their personal safety and well-being.
- 7.4.6 Observers must take care that their personal safety is not jeopardised, or their acts or omissions do not affect the Ambulance Crew or Ambulance Control staff.
- 7.4.7 Any and all PPE issued to observers must be returned to the NAS on completion of the visit.

7.5 OBSERVER ARRIVAL AT STATION/AMBULANCE CONTROL

- 7.5.1 Letter (Copy) of Authority and Observers objectives should be available on Station/Ambulance Control to ensure that the staff are aware of the basis for the observers' presence.
- 7.5.2 Notification of observers attending NAS locations should be communicated to relevant staff normally giving one week's notice but giving a minimum of three days notice in exceptional circumstances only.

- 7.5.3 All observers must report to the agreed area and liaise with the supervising staff member at that location.
- 7.5.4 The supervising staff member must ensure that appropriate documentation has been completed including the Observers Checklist (Appendix II) and that observers are briefed.
- 7.5.5 All observers will be issued with a fluorescent jacket; helmet and visitors badge to enable them to be identified clearly.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 This Policy will be circulated electronically to all Managers, all Supervisors and Staff
- 8.2 This Policy will be available in electronic format in each Ambulance Station and Ambulance Control for ease of retrieval and reference
- 8.3 Each Operational Support and Resilience Manager will ensure that the Manager/Supervisor responsible for updating Policies and Procedures will return the Confirmation Form to NAS Headquarters to confirm document circulation to all staff

9.0 REVISION AND AUDIT

- 9.1 This Policy will remain under constant review and may be subject to change to facilitate any changes/developments in service requirements.
- 9.2 The Quality, Safety and Risk Manager will undertake random audits of the paperwork relating to the presence of Observers to ascertain ongoing compliance.
- 9.3 The Workforce Support Manager will review the effectiveness of this Procedure and propose amendments where deemed necessary.

10.1 REFERENCES

- None applicable

11.1 APPENDICES

Appendix I - Policy Acknowledgement Form **Appendix II** – Observer Checklist **Appendix III** - Letter of Authority **Appendix IV** – Pro Forma Return **Appendix V** – Confidential Information Declaration **Appendix VI** – Experiential Evaluation **Appendix VII** – Group Application for Educational Institutes

APPENDIX II

NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE - OBSERVERS CHECK LIST

This list should be completed by the relevant supervising member of staff at the commencement of the observation period. In the absence of a Control Supervisor or Paramedic Supervisor, the relevant staff member must satisfy themselves that the criteria has been met and the checklist completed by them and the observer.

The observer must not commence any period of observation until all aspects of this checklist has been completed.

When completed each criteria must be initialled by both the staff member and the Observer and the completed document signed.

Criteria	Supervisor	Observer
Letter of Authority Verified		
Confidentiality Agreement signed		
Basic scene awareness including RTC's & motorways		
Basic scene awareness - do's and don'ts guidance (see below)		
Fire precautions		
Infection Control Standard Precautions understood		
Identification to be worn		
Objectives seen by Supervisor		
PPE issue & guidance on its use		
Familiarisation with all aspects of vehicle safety/personal safety		

Observer's Signature: **Date:**

Staff member's Signature: **Date:**

BASIC SCENE AWARENESS - DO'S AND DON'T'S

Do's

- Ensure that identification is worn at all times.
- Ensure that protective clothing and equipment is worn at all times and when requested by the Ambulance Crew.
- Act under the direction of the Ambulance Crew/Control staff for your own and other peoples benefit.
- Wear seatbelts whenever in a moving vehicle, you are not exempt from doing so because you are with the NAS.
- Ensure your own and other peoples safety in accordance with good Safety, Health and Welfare at Work practice.
- If you introduce yourself to anyone you must make it plain that you are an observer with the NAS
- You may see things that are distressing. If you do, look away and return to the vehicle. It is all right to do this. Advise your Supervisor/crew.

Don'ts

- You are not authorised to drive any vehicle belonging to the NAS.
- You must not actively treat patients unless it has been identified as part of the objectives set out in your original request letter and you are professionally qualified and authorised by the Medical Director to do so.
- Leave the scene of an incident or the NAS without notifying the Ambulance Crew that you are leaving.
- Place yourself in a situation in which you feel uncomfortable.
- You are not authorised to copy information, record, photograph or film during your period of observation.

APPENDIX III

To: THE OBSERVER'S EMPLOYER/VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION OR
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Date Dear

Letter of Authority - Observer with National Ambulance Service

Further to your request for Dr/Mr/Ms * to spend some time observing with the National Ambulance Service, I am pleased to confirm that this has been agreed subject to a number of conditions listed below:

It is the responsibility of the observer's employers/voluntary organisation to ensure that any observers

- Have an up to date professional registration (if applicable)
- Are of a state of health that is in keeping with completion of the placement
- Meet occupational health requirements for vaccinations including Hep B
- Are made aware that they may be accidentally exposed to body fluids during the course of the observation
- Have been vetted/checked by An Garda Siochana**

* A group application form may be used for an organisational application that addresses the needs of a large number of potential observers. See appendix VII

* In the exceptional event that students do not have a recent Garda Vetting process completed their sponsoring institute must confirm in writing that they support the placement and know of no reason why the NAS should not facilitate such placements

In addition, following receipt of this letter please complete and return the attached pro-forma to confirm that you as the employer/voluntary organisation or educational institute accept responsibility that the above requirements are met.

It is the responsibility of the observer to ensure the following:

- The observers must present themselves **with this letter of authority** on arrival **at**

- The observer must report for duty on..... at..... hours, in smart dark trousers and sturdy boots or shoes.
- The observer must work directly under the instructions of the National Ambulance Service staff that the observer is observing with.
- The observer should not become involved in patient care. If it becomes necessary for the observer to become involved, the observer must adhere to the objectives set out in the employer's/voluntary organisation or educational institute's application letter.

- When observing on a National Ambulance Service vehicle the observer must wear the hi-visibility jacket provided at all times and the helmet when instructed by National Ambulance Service staff.
- The observer must ensure patient and staff confidentiality is maintained at all times. Attached to this letter is the Service's confidentiality agreement, which must be signed by the observer and presented upon arrival at Station/Ambulance Control.
- The observer must obey all standing fire, health and safety instructions currently in operation within the National Ambulance Service.

I acknowledge the length of the above list but I am sure you will appreciate the importance of making these points clear to all parties concerned.

I look forward to receiving your written confirmation, if you have any questions or problems, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Education and Competency Assurance Officer c.c.:

Operational Support and Resilience Manager

APPENDIX IV

NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE - PRO-FORMA RETURN PLEASE

FAX BACK TO

Observers Name: _____

Employing/Voluntary Organisation _____

Dates of Observation - From: _____ to: _____

I (Name)

Of..... (Employer/Voluntary Organisation)

1. Acknowledge receipt of the letter dated **XXXXXX** outlining the National Ambulance Service expectations regarding any third party observers accompanying National Ambulance Service staff in their working environment.
2. Understand and agree to comply with the content of the letter
3. Accept liability for the actions of the observer
4. I confirm and accept responsibility for the following:
 - Each observers professional registration is valid and up to date (if applicable)
 - Each observer meets the occupational health requirements for vaccinations including Hep B
 - Each Observer has been made aware that they may be accidentally exposed to body fluids during the course of the observation.
 - Each observer meets necessary Garda Siochana checks.

Signed:

.....

Print

name:

.....

Designation:

Date:

.....

NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE CONFIDENTIAL

INFORMATION DECLARATION

In the course of your work with the National Ambulance Service you may have access to, see or hear, confidential information concerning the medical or personal affairs of patients, their family or carers, staff, or related to other Health Service Executive business.

Unless acting on the instructions of an authorised Officer of the National Ambulance Service, **on no account** must such information be divulged or discussed, except in the performance of normal duty.

Breaches of confidence including the improper passing of data will result in action being taken against you.

You must take all reasonable practical steps to ensure that confidential information is kept secure at all times.

You are not permitted to make copy, abstract, summary or précis of the whole or part of any document belonging to the Health Service Executive except where expressly authorised to do so or in the proper performance of your duties.

In the event that any restriction defined above shall be found to be void but would be valid if some part of it was deleted, such restriction shall apply with such modifications as may be necessary to make them valid and effective.

I hereby sign that I understand and will adhere to the above.

Signed:

.....

Print

name:

.....

Designation:

Date:

.....

.....

APPENDIX VI

National Ambulance Service - Experience Evaluation Student's Name:

..... Date: Dates

observer/experience undertaken: **Summary of work activities observed/undertaken**

Summary of Student's Experience (include objectives that were achieved, what worked well, what didn't work well and how other students might benefit)

Mentor's signature: Date:

Manager's signature: Date:
National Ambulance Service

