

**Guidelines for the training and
handling of medicines
in practical studies
for the Bachelor of
Nursing and
Bachelor of Prehospital Work,
Paramedic**

PHS 2009, revised 2018 by:

Associate Professor Lisbeth Nerdal

Assistant Professor Wenche Rekkedal

Approved by the Dean

Effective from 19/02/2018

THESE GUIDELINES ARE BASED ON:

1. Regulations of 3 April 2008, no. 320 on medication management for enterprises and health professionals that provide healthcare. Last revised 01/01/2015.
2. Circular IS-7/2015, Norwegian Directorate of Health. The Medication Management Regulations and comments.
3. The Norwegian Health Personnel Act.
4. The placement location's guidelines for the placement student's participation in the handling of medicines.

HANDLING OF MEDICINES

Pursuant to the regulations,¹ the handling of medicines refers to all activities associated with medicines that are performed from the time at which the medicine is prescribed until it has been administered.

Typical responsibilities linked to the handling of medicines may² relate

to: Section 1. Preparation of medicines for individual patients:

- Reading and understanding the doctor's prescription
- Preparation and, if applicable, calculation of the dose of medicine
- Preparation/filling of dosing box
- Drawing medicinal solution into syringe
- Control and documentation

Authorised health professionals who have responsibilities linked to the handling of medicines covered under Section 1 are expected to have adequate professional expertise and experience relating to the following:

The effect and mode of action of medicines. Shelf life and storage. Different types of medicines. Interactions. Side effects. Observations. Medication calculations. Knowledge of dosing (including knowledge of IE and mmol). Aseptic working techniques for additives. Documentation.

Section 2. Administration of prepared medicines to patients:

- Patient identification
- Observing that the patient takes the medicine
- Documenting that the medicine has been administered
- Observing effect/side effects

Expertise requirements for personnel when administering prepared medicinal products to patients: "Health professionals who perform duties relating to the handling of medicines must have the necessary knowledge (prior learning and work experience) to manage the task. When assessing this, emphasis is placed not only on formal education but also on prior learning and work experience gained through prior experience, courses, etc. in light of the type of duties the personnel will perform. This provision must be viewed in the context of Section 4, fifth paragraph, item a) and the principles set down in accordance with Section 5, first paragraph of the Norwegian Health Personnel Act.

The objective of training in the handling of medicines is for the student to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to handle medicines in a proper manner. Upon completion of the study programme, students will have the ability to properly manage medicines.

¹ Regulations of 3 April 2008, no. 320 on medication management for enterprises and health professionals that provide healthcare. Last revised 01/01/2015

² Circular IS-7/2015, Norwegian Directorate of Health. The Medication Management Regulations and comments.



THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University is responsible for ensuring that students receive the necessary teaching relating to legislation, regulations and procedures associated with the handling of medicines in the profession, as well as clarifying the requirements for progress in connection with the handling of medicine during the study programme.

Before nursing students participate in supervised professional training in the municipal health service, the students will have received training in general pharmacology and theoretical/practical teaching in the handling of medicines and medication calculation.

Before nursing students participate in supervised professional training in the specialist health service, the students will have received training in pharmacology linked to various somatic disorders, theoretical/practical teaching in the administration of IV medicines and the administration of infusions with and without additives.

They will also have passed a medication calculation test with no errors.

Before nursing students participate in supervised professional training in mental health work, the students will have received teaching in the use of psychopharmaceuticals.

Before paramedic students participate in the second period of supervised professional training, the students will have received teaching in general pharmacology and theoretical/practical teaching in the handling of medicines and medication calculation.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLACEMENT LOCATION

Organisations that offer supervised professional training placements to students must have procedures in place for the training of students in the handling of medicines⁴. The regulations set out requirements for the expertise of health professionals to be assessed individually based on the individual's formal qualifications and prior learning and work experience, the nature of the duties and the follow-up provided⁵. This requirement also applies to students during supervised professional training⁶. It is therefore crucial that the organisation has a system in place that ensures appropriate follow-up of students and progress during supervised professional training, both to ensure a good programme for students and the proper utilisation of their expertise.

The organisation's procedures must describe safe and proper practices and must be documented, communicated and complied with throughout the organisation⁷.

Throughout the supervised professional training, the placement supervisors/contact nurses will supervise and assess students so that the students can gradually acquire skills relating to the proper handling of medicines. The practical training in the handling of medicines will therefore take place in the presence of and subject to checks by authorised health professionals with expertise in the handling of medicines. This generally applies to all stages of the handling of medicines, from preparation and checking to administration.

³ National Curriculum for Nursing Education, 2008. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

⁴ Regulations of 3 April 2008, no. 320 on medication management for enterprises and health professionals that provide healthcare. Last revised 01/01/2015

⁵ The Norwegian Health Personnel Act Section 5

⁶ The Norwegian Health Personnel Act Section 3

⁷ Regulations of 3 April 2008, no. 320 on medication management for enterprises and health professionals that provide healthcare. Last revised 01/01/2015

Depending on the qualifications of the individual student (theoretical knowledge, progress in the programme of study, prior experience and ability to assess and master unexpected situations, etc.), it may be sufficient for the placement supervisor to be easily available, i.e. the supervisor does not need to be physically present when the student performs tasks relating to the handling of medicines⁸.

The regulations⁹ do not prevent students from gradually accumulating expertise and independence within the handling of medicines, thereby becoming better equipped for what is expected of them when they qualify as health professionals. Whether a student can be assigned more independent duties must be assessed on an individual basis and take into account the types of duties concerned (which patients, which medicines, routes of administration, etc.).

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The student will be responsible for familiarising themselves with and adhering to the procedures and guidelines applicable to the handling of medicines at the placement location. All health professionals (including students) have an **individual responsibility** for ensuring the proper professional practice of the occupation and must act in accordance with their professional qualifications¹⁰. Students are therefore personally responsible for their own actions and have a duty to raise any needs for supervision and training. Students cannot independently perform duties relating to the handling of medicines, but students may take a more independent role in line with qualifications being acquired. Increasing independence must be anchored in training and must take place through a close relationship and understanding with the placement supervisor/contact nurse during supervised professional training. The student will also be responsible for ensuring that all medicines that the student administers to patients are double-checked.

Separate rules apply to students in employment relationships (extra shifts/holiday substitutes, etc.). In the event that students will administer medicines as part of an employment relationship, written authorisation from the business manager must be available. The business manager will be responsible for facilitating training and follow-up of students in employment relationships.

NON-CONFORMITY

All medication errors or near-errors must be reported to the responsible placement supervisor/contact nurse immediately and must be dealt with in the same way as for the organisation's other employees, cf. non-conformity management at the organisation. The placement supervisor/contact nurse must ensure that non-conformities that occur in training situations are reported to the University. It is important to ensure that the placement supervisor/contact nurse follows up on students individually when non-conformities occur. As health professionals, students are responsible for their own errors.

Any violation of guidelines may result in a fail grade for the supervised professional training.

⁸ Circular IS-7/2015, The Norwegian Directorate of Health

⁹ Regulations of 3 April 2008, no. 320 on medication management for enterprises and health professionals that provide healthcare. Last revised 01/01/2015

¹⁰ The Norwegian Health Personnel Act Section 4

**Citation from circular
IS-7/2015:**

3.4.5 The use of students

Section 4-4 of the regulations states that students may be assigned duties in line with Section 5-2 of the Norwegian Health Personnel Act. It states:

“Section 5. Use of assistants

Health personnel may in their work assign certain tasks to other personnel if it is considered safe to do so based on the nature of the assigned task, the qualification of the assigned personnel and the guidance that is being provided.

Assistants shall be subject to the control and supervision of health personnel.

Pupils and students shall as a rule only be assigned tasks based on their need for training.”

It follows from the comments on the provision in the circular on the Norwegian Health Personnel Act (IS-8/2012) that the provision allows for pupils and students to be given the opportunity to participate in routine activities. Furthermore, it is also stipulated that:

Pupils and students should be given additional follow-up. Follow-up and supervision in practical patient activities are considered important contributions to the quality assurance of qualifications and thereby also to patient safety.”

For health professionals that will handle medicines, practical training should also include training on the procedures and practical aspects of medicines handling. As a general rule, students should not be assigned independent authority to handle medicines. The practical training in the handling of medicines will therefore take place in the presence of and subject to checks by authorised health professionals with expertise in the handling of medicines. This generally applies to all stages of the handling of medicines, from preparation and checking to administration. Depending on the qualifications of the individual student (theoretical knowledge, progress in the programme of study, prior experience and ability to assess and master unexpected situations, etc.), it may be sufficient for the placement supervisor to be easily available, i.e. the supervisor does not need to be physically present. Students will gradually acquire skills and may, following an individual assessment, eventually work more independently on the handling of medicines.

Whether a student can be assigned more independent duties must, however, be assessed on an individual basis and will depend on the types of duties concerned (which patients, which medicines, routes of administration, etc.). In the same way as for other health professionals, the business manager (or academic adviser) will be responsible for assessing the duties and ways in which students can participate in the handling of medicines.

With regard to the use of other substitutes, i.e. in the event of holiday leave or similar, the provision set out in Section 5-1 of the Norwegian Health Personnel Act shall apply. Duties will be assigned following an individual assessment of the substitute’s expertise.