



Placement Attendance

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1. Practice Placement as an Essential Learning Experience

Practice placement experiences are an important part of learning to become a nurse or a midwife. They provide opportunities for you to refine and further develop the skills that you have learned in skills laboratories and the classroom by working in real life professional practice situations. Learning to develop your professional knowledge and to relate your reading whilst working and learning in your practice placement means that you need to make the most of every opportunity to work alongside experienced practitioners and to give care either under close supervision or, once your mentor has judged you to be safe, by working under their distant supervision.

As a student of City University London, School of Health Sciences, you have permission to enter the practice placement setting by virtue of the allocation list which is a substitute for an honorary contract. As a result you receive indemnity insurance cover, but only providing, you act in accordance with the policies and procedures of the placement provider and City University London at all times.

Being classed as supernumerary to the regular staffing team of your placement means there are sufficient staff to deliver the required care for the shift. Your supervision and support is not normally calculated into the staffing levels and so the care activities that you are asked to undertake not only provide you with the experience and learning opportunities that you need but also frees your mentor to support you.

Preparing for your placement is essential if you are to get the best of the experience. Staff will expect you to have done some preliminary reading about the placement, the special aspects of care that are provided by the placement staff and that you have studied your related subject theory. You need to make sure that you have all your practice related documents with you when you start as they will enable your mentor to give you the support that you need.

Before you first start on your placement it is essential that you alert your mentor of any factors that may affect your ability to work and learn successfully. Some factors such as pregnancy, or a mental or physical disability or if you have any form of learning need such as dyslexia, may pose a health and safety risk to you and your patients. Your mentor will then make arrangements for any reasonable adjustments to be made.

Moving to a new placement, especially in the early stages of your programme can be both exciting and disorientating. Each time you will need to get know a different group of practitioners, their styles of working and communicating and their expectations of you. Additionally, you will be learning about the needs and health care delivery of a different client group. Undertaking your preliminary preparation will shorten this uncomfortable settling-in period. As you become more skilled you will find it gets quicker to adjust, and of course that depends upon you making the best of every learning opportunity.

2. Professional Requirements for Practice Placements

The amount of time that you spend in practice has been specified by the professional statutory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and your programme has been designed to ensure you meet these requirements. If you are taking a three year degree in nursing (RN/BSc (Hons)) or a shorter post graduate diploma (RN/PG Dip) pre-registration programme you are required to complete 2300 hours of practice experience for nursing. If you are taking the shorter RN/PG Dip route then the number of practice hours may be reduced if you have been able to use the accredited prior learning process (APL) to adjust these hours. If you cannot APL clinical hours then a clinical placement will be offered at the end of your programme to enable you to complete the necessary number of clinical



hours. If you are taking a three year degree in midwifery (RM/BSc (Hons)) you are required to complete 156 weeks with 60% of this being in practice or 78 weeks (RM/PG Dip) if you are registered with the NMC as a nurse level 1. Another requirement is that during your practice placement experiences, you must have experience of the 24-hour care of patients as well as of the full range of care over a seven day week. This means that by the final parts of your programme (Part 3) you will be expected to work morning, evening, night and weekend shifts, and we will be more specific about this further on.

Working a seven and half hour (7.5) shift gives you the opportunity to learn the daily routines, to be involved in care delivery repetitively and to develop your professional skills and knowledge. Becoming a successful nurse or midwife depends upon you having this kind of repetitive exposure to practice and allows you to develop a repertoire of knowledge that you can use when delivering care to individual patients (Benner, Tanner et al 1996). Research indicates that when students have grasped the daily routines and activities they can then begin to see the relevance of their formal classroom knowledge and to use and expand it (Spouse 2003). This makes learning in and from practice a reality.

Interruptions to your programme

If you find that you need to interrupt your programme for any reason, you will not be able to apply for professional registration until you have made up all the required clinical and theory hours. This can sometimes be longer than the amount of time that was outstanding when you took a break and is due to Nursing and Midwifery Council requirements.

Registration

Successful registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council is dependant not only upon successful completion of assignments and learning outcomes but evidence that you are fit to practise and this includes health, personal conduct and completion of all your practice hours. This information is taken from your practice placement records for the whole of your programme.

3. Placement Attendance for Learning in Practice

The School of Health Sciences and its placement partners work collaboratively to provide you with the best possible practice placement experiences and your shift times will be designed to facilitate these. During your practice placement you will be supervised by members of staff who have been trained to do so and you will be given their name when you first start your placement.

We are conscious that many of our students have family responsibilities and we will do our best to support you to meet these. However we make the assumption that your priority is to become a registered midwife or nurse and that you have made the necessary arrangements for adequate support so that you can be punctual and reliable throughout your programme and particularly in your attendance at your practice placements.

3.1 In Summary During your Placement Shifts you Will:

- i) work 40% of your shifts with your supervisor/mentor/sign off mentor or associate mentor.
- ii) receive constant supervision and support from named, suitably qualified and experienced practitioners on each of your practice placement shifts.



- iii) work over the 24 hour, seven day a week range of shifts (unless you are a first year student/ or Part 1).
- iv) participate in the delivery and management of care provided to patients/clients in the placement setting.
- v) ensure that you have sufficient exposure to the normal every-day care of patients/clients to meet the learning outcomes of your placement.
- vi) ensure that you complete the prescribed number of hours for your placement during your placement allocation.
- vii) ensure that your Practice Hours record is accurate and is signed by your Placement Mentor/Sign Off Mentor or Placement Manager by the last date of your placement and that this is submitted with your Practice Assessment Document (PAD).

3.2 Exceptional Circumstances

If in an exceptional circumstance you have specific difficulties about attending a specific shift, you may be able to negotiate some flexibility providing you can meet the criteria in 3.1 and the following:

- i) the change of shift (time) has been agreed with your mentor/sign off mentor and your placement manager.
- ii) you adhere to this agreement.

3.3 Placement Shift Hours

Your placement experience will normally consist of five days of 7.5 hours (i.e. 37.5 hours per week) and you will be notified of the total number of hours to be completed by the Programme Director.

These practice hours are designed to meet the requirements identified in 3.1 and to:

- i) provide opportunities to attend practice placement related seminars and tutorials.
- ii) include one short tea/coffee break of 15 minutes.

N.B. Your main meal break is not counted as practice hours. When undertaking longer shifts such as night duty your meal breaks will be calculated to reflect the difference.

3.3.1 Public / Bank Holidays

Students are not required to work on a Public Holiday (Bank Holiday).

3.3.2 Working Long Day Shifts

Students may work long day shifts providing the following criteria can be met:



- i) if you, the student, are willing to work long day shifts.
- ii) if long day shifts are a normal pattern of work for the placement staff.
- iii) if you will receive supervision and mentored educational support.
- iv) if you work the equivalent of 37.5 hours a week (150 hours in a 4 week period).

3.4 Weekend and Night Duty Arrangements

3.4.1 First year (Part 1) midwifery and nursing students

- i) As a first year nursing or midwifery student you may work one weekend (whole or part) in any single placement allocation where the service is open.
- ii) However, if you wish to gain a specific placement experience that only takes place at weekends you may work more than one weekend as part of your placement hours providing you will have effective educational support and that it does not compromise your ability to meet your learning outcomes for the placement.
- iii) As a first year student you will not normally work night duty as this is not appropriate experience for this part of your programme.

3.4.2 Second and third (Part 2 and Part 3) year nursing and midwifery students

Over the second and third years of your programme you should plan to work a minimum of 6 night shifts and generally a maximum of 12 night shifts. If you work more night shifts than these it could prevent you from achieving your learning outcomes and thus becoming registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. You may only work night shifts if you are working alongside your mentor or under the supervision of a registered practitioner.

4. Undertaking Paid Employment

- i. If you are receiving a bursary (NHS Bursary) at City University London you are permitted to undertake paid employment providing it does not amount to 20 hours or more in any 7 day period.
- ii. You are not permitted to precede or follow a period of paid employment with a programme practice placement shift (known as back to back working). If you are found to have worked in this manner you will be subject to disciplinary procedures, both by your employer and by the university.
- iii. European Working Time Directives – Under the terms of the European Working Time Directives you are not permitted to undertake any form of paid employment where the combination of your placement hours and your working hours amount to 48 hours or more over any seven (7) day period. If you are found to have breached this Directive you will be subject to disciplinary proceedings by both the university and by your employer.

5. Sickness or Negotiated Absence from Placements and your Programme

Your attendance on placements must be accurately monitored and recorded to meet the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) for successful completion of your programme. Any kind of absence, including absence due to sickness or injury that occurs either during School-based



activities, practice placements or annual leave must be recorded. The Programme Officer (Admin team) must be notified of any sickness/injury or absence immediately and relies upon your good communication skills.

It is important that you keep your own records in case of any discrepancy. Whilst on placement you must make sure that any absence caused by sickness or injury is accurately recorded on your Practice Hours Sheet (in your Practice Assessment Document (PAD) and then initialled. The placement staff may also wish to keep a record of any absence that you have during your allocation (sickness or otherwise).

Details of all your absence (due to sickness or otherwise) is recorded by The School Health Sciences, and your Programme Director and Personal Tutor are able to access this data (dates and frequency only). This information is used for writing your reference or for making decisions about recommending you as Fit for Practice to the Nursing and Midwifery Council and thus your fitness for professional registration.

You must always discuss your sickness/injury or negotiated leave with your Personal Tutor and / or Programme Director so that you can agree plans for making up lost time from your programme if this is required. You need to be aware that if you receive a bursary, your payments may be affected by your absence/ certificated sick leave.

5.1 Sickness and Injury Affecting Attendance on Practice Placements

The following explains actions you need to take during periods of sickness/injury in order to ensure accurate records are made.

As soon as you know that you will be unable to attend for your duties you must:

- contact your mentor or placement area manager
- contact the University sickness number (07624 819 021) sending a text message giving your student number, name, cohort and dates of sickness.
- if you are receiving salary support (seconded) you must notify your employer immediately of any sickness or absence. You must give the following information:
 - i) your name, cohort and student number
 - ii) the name of your placement and placement mentor
 - iii) the estimated dates that you are taking sick leave.

When you phone your placement area you should try to speak to the registered midwife/nurse in charge or your mentor and take a note of the name of the person taking your message. Ask this person to record your message in the work diary/message book, and make sure that you check that they have the correct information.

You must also: make a record of the dates of sickness or absence in your own attendance record along with the date and time of notification and the name of the person you spoke to.

5.2 Returning to your Programme

When you are fit enough to return to your placement, you must notify the Programme Director and your Personal Tutor that you are now fit to return. If you would normally be attending a practice placement you must also contact your Placement Mentor to let them know that you are now fit to



return to your placement and to discuss your shift times. The following exceptions apply: If you are returning from sick leave, as a result of any of the following you must get advice and certified health clearance either from your GP or from City University London, Occupational Health (OH). This may be discussed with your Personal Tutor or your Programme Director. If you have:

- i) suffered from diarrhoea and vomiting for more than 48 hours.
- ii) been sick whilst overseas (especially in a tropical country).
- iii) sustained a significant muscular-skeletal injury, such as those from a road traffic accident or from back strain.
- iv) a highly infectious skin conditions such as: scabies.
- v) contact with an infectious disease e.g. chicken pox, rubella, TB.
- vi) an allergic reaction to a substance or product, e.g. latex gloves.
- vii) a long term condition (this is defined as more than four weeks and as a result of suffering from any condition, illness or injury).
- vii) frequent episodes of sickness/absence.

N.B. You are not permitted to undertake practice placements until you have received clearance from the City University London Student Occupational Health Service (OH). Your Programme Director will organise an appointment for you with OH.

5.3 Sickness Certification

You are required to provide certification of your sickness or injury that covers the whole period of absence, including sickness/injury that occurred prior to or during annual leave. This certificate should be sent to:

Programme Officer, Under Graduate Studies, City University, School of Health Sciences, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB.

If you have been sick or injured requiring:

- i) a self-certificate covering up to four (4) consecutive days of absence.
- ii) a medical certificate after eight (8) consecutive day of absence. This must be sent to the School within 6 days of completion of the earlier certificate.

6. Injury Whilst on Duty

If you have sustained an injury (e.g. sharps/splash) whilst on duty you must:

- i) inform the manager of your placement area. If this person is not available you must contact the Trust Occupational Health Department or the Accident and Emergency Department.
- ii) complete an incident form and follow the local Trust/organisation policy under the guidance of the manager or the person in charge of your placement location.



7. Pregnancy

- i. If you become pregnant during your programme and you are undertaking practice placement experiences, you and your baby may be at risk, so it is essential that you notify your Programme Director as well as your Personal Tutor as soon as you are aware that you are pregnant. You will be advised to have an Occupational Health check to assess whether you need any reasonable adjustments to your practice experience (See the School Maternity Policy for more information).
- ii. You may attend ante-natal appointments during your placement hours, but you may need to make up the lost time. This must be negotiated with your mentor.
- iii. If you are pregnant or breast feeding and you are either going to or are on a placement you must inform your placement mentor or manager immediately so that an appropriate risk assessment can be made. This is to ensure that your health and safety needs are met during your placement.
 - If the placement is considered to be too hazardous for you to continue your placement experience then either an alternative placement will be found or if this is not possible and no other reasonable option is available, you may have to commence your maternity break.
 - When you know the likely date for you to return to your programme you must provide your Programme Director with no less than 4 weeks' notice of your proposed return so that the necessary arrangements can be made, and you can be given the exact date of your return. This date will depend upon the availability of a place being available for you. (see Maternity Policy for Pre-Registration nursing and midwifery students).

8. Compassionate Leave and other Leave in Special or Exceptional Circumstances

8.1 Compassionate Leave

- i) You may apply to your Programme Director / Personal Tutor or your placement mentor or manager for compassionate leave if you are facing a situation such as bereavement of a close family member, partner or other situation causing serious distress. This time is added to any sickness or absence record and you may have to make up the time according to the agreement with your Programme Director.
- ii) You are normally allowed to take a maximum of three days compassionate leave.
- iii) If you require a longer period of compassionate leave you must contact your Programme Director or their designated deputy who can then grant, if appropriate, a request for a longer period of compassionate leave.
- iv) You must make sure that you inform your personal tutor, your mentor or practice area manager if you are in practice as soon as you have permission to take this compassionate leave.

8.2 Negotiated Leave for any Other Purpose

- i. Absence for paternity leave or carer leave: you may apply to your Personal Tutor and your Programme Director for special paternity leave or carer's leave. This time may need to be made up to meet the requirements of your programme and the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This is because if you are taking a full time pre-registration programme it has to be completed within 5 years of the start date.



ii. Attendance for Interviews: if you are a third year student (Part 3) in your final four months of training you may take negotiated time off from your duties to attend a maximum of three (3) interviews for post-registration staffing posts. You will need to produce evidence of the interview date/s and time/s in order to negotiate this absence.

If you wish to attend additional job interviews you will need to negotiate this time off with your mentor. You may have to make up the practice placement time.

N.B. Dentist/Doctors' appointments: You are expected to arrange these types of personal appointments when you are not on duty in your clinical placement.

8.3 Making Up Lost Time

i. If you have had up to 5 days absence from your placement you may negotiate with your mentor to make up the time during the allocation period if these hours are required.

ii. If you have had 6 days absence or more from any one placement you need to discuss the situation with your Programme Director so arrangements can be made for you to make up the time, either at the end of the academic year or at the end of your programme if these hours are required.

Whilst academic and placement staff will do their best to accommodate students' requests for a specific return date to their programme or return to a placement this may not always be possible. Your return date will be based on the availability of a suitable placement and it may not be possible for you to return to the same practice area.

9. Non Compliance with the Attendance Policy

Unauthorised absence is defined as any form of non-attendance that is not due to sickness or injury or which has not previously been negotiated and agreed with your mentor/sign off mentor or placement manager. This includes:

- i) Persistent lateness/poor timekeeping
- ii) Absence from the placement that is not Leave due to sickness/injury or negotiated in advance
- iii) A breach in any of the policies relating to your attendance (including reporting sickness/injury etc. and the European Working Time directives)

Unauthorised absence is considered to be unprofessional conduct and implies a lack of consideration and respect for other colleagues. Such behaviour is deemed unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action. This information may influence recommendations about your suitability for professional registration.

Your practice placement mentor/sign off mentor is required to report your absence to the University immediately and to the Practice Experience Facilitator/Manager (PEF/PEM) or the Clinical Practice Facilitator (CPF) in Midwifery. It will also be documented on your Practice Hours sheet in your Practice Assessment Document (PAD).

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