

Nursing and Midwifery Student Working Hours in Practice Guidance

The following guide has been produced for Students, Academics, Learning Environment Managers, and Mentors to enable all parties to work closely together to ensure that the same information is given to students and placement partners.

We recognise that many of our students will need to travel to their placement. Wherever possible we will not expect students to travel for longer than 2 hours to a placement. However if a student chooses to live outside of the placement circuit this limit may not be possible due to the geographical location of the students home and the available placement.

Principles of The European Working Time Directive [EWTD] (1998) - please refer to the Working Time Directive (WTD) - Advice to health and social care students in the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

Please note: There are some slight differences between student nurses and student midwives. The term Student refers to all students where there are differences this is indicated by the use of student nurse or student midwife.

Student Working Hours in Practice

- The hours worked on the course [excluding breaks] must be recorded in the student's attendance record and signed by the mentor or Registered Nurse/ Midwife supervising the student.
- It is the student's responsibility to maintain an accurate up to date record (running total) of the placement hours they have worked.
- Students can not undertake placement hours during campus learning weeks. Campus learning weeks are counted as theory hours and are therefore not able to be counted as placement hours. Any shift hours worked during campus learning weeks will not be counted towards placement hours.
- Students will undertake a range of shifts from the outset of their programme.
- Students will work weekends from commencement of the programme as appropriate to the practice setting.
- **The shifts that students work will be identified by the practice area** and will be influenced by: the normal shift patterns worked on the area they are allocated to, the working pattern of their mentor and the numbers of students requiring supervision.

- There may be an opportunity for a student to negotiate to work long shifts (**maximum 14 hours**). Students should not expect to always work this type of shift, as it may not be appropriate and long shifts can only be worked with the agreement of the mentor and the Learning Environment Manager.
- Students would not normally be expected to work more than 2 consecutive long shifts together.
- Students should normally work a minimum of **37.5 hours per week in practice**.
- If students need to make up hours they have missed during the placement, the total number of hours worked **should normally not exceed 48 hours per week** [see making up hours section].
- Where any student has more than seven days' absence, the link lecturer should be informed. This is to ensure the university can identify necessary support structures.
- If **Midwifery students** miss any Mandatory parts of practice (this could be hours or specific experiences) the student should contact the Course Leader to discuss this.
- Nursing and midwifery can be a stressful occupations and it is important students look after their health and wellbeing therefore working 48 hours per week, should only be in exceptional circumstances rather than the norm. This includes time worked outside of the course.

Students' shift hours and breaks

In order to provide clarity on breaks the University is proposing the following:

- **During a long day an adequate rest period of at least 60 minutes** (may be split into two 30 minute breaks) should normally be taken. These breaks should not be claimed for in the hours documented in their attendance record. So, if a student works 13.5 hours, with a one hour rest period, they will record 12.5 hours worked in their attendance record. In addition a concessionary 15 minutes break during the shift may be taken which can be included in the hours worked. **NB in exceptional cases, shorter breaks may be taken based on client need. However this should not become routine practice, nor should students routinely use this to shorten their working shift.**
- **During an 8 hour shift, a rest period of at least 30 minutes should be taken.** Again, the time allocated for this break should not be claimed for in the hours worked. So, if a student works 8 hours, with a 30 minute break, they will record 7.5 hours worked in their attendance record. In addition, a concessionary 15 minutes break during the shift may be taken which can be included in the hours worked.
- Flexibility about when breaks are taken must be negotiated within the placement area. In certain circumstances (e.g. attending a woman in labour) timing of breaks may be delayed.

However, it is important that students recognise the effects of fatigue on performance and concentration. If a student expresses personal problems the mentor should encourage the student to contact their Student Support Officer.

Night Shifts

- Students are expected to experience delivery of care over the 24 hour period (this is an NMC Requirement).
- **Important note: Students are not permitted to attend full days at University prior to or immediately after a night shift.**
- All BSc Nursing students should complete a minimum of 60 hours of night duty before the end of the 3 Year Programme.
- MSc and PgDip Nursing students should complete 40 hours of night duty during their programme.
- Students may experience night duty from the first placement onwards if appropriate/available.
- Please note that not all placements can offer night duty and therefore students must be certain that they have gained appropriate experience, in the delivery of care over the 24 hour period, prior to the completion of the course.
- Student nurses would not normally be expected to work more than 2 consecutive night shifts.
- **Midwifery students** will follow the rostered hours of their sign-off mentor and may undertake night duty in any placement area. There is no specified cap on the number of hours in each year but students would normally be expected to experience 24 hour care in each hospital midwifery placement.

Bank Holidays

- **Midwifery students** have no extra time off placement for Bank holidays. They are expected to work 37.5 hours during weeks that include bank holidays and may negotiate to take the bank holiday as one of their days off in that week or negotiate to take some of their planned study time during that week.
- Whilst on placement, **student nurses** are not expected to work Bank Holidays and should take these in addition to their days off in the week in which the Bank Holiday occurs.
- If a student nurse negotiates to work the Bank Holiday with their mentor, then they will be entitled to another day off. **For example; some students may have other religious beliefs and may negotiate to use the BH for dates significant to their religious calendar.** This is

possible but must be negotiated in advance and clearly indicated on their attendance record.

- When students take the actual Bank Holiday day off (on the BH) this is recorded in the Attendance record as a Bank Holiday [BH] by practice staff and/or student and **these hours are NOT included** in the weekly total.
- It is important to note that 7.5 hours are allowed for each Bank Holiday [even when the student has been working long shifts]. So, if there is one BH during a week, the student will be required to work 30 hours during that week and if there are two BHs during a week, then the student will be required to work 22.5 hours that week.
- If a student nurse chooses to work the Bank Holiday they should record how many hours they worked for that day but then put 'BH' against one of their days off. This will ensure that they can be credited with the Bank Holiday hours, as it will be clear that they have worked the Bank Holiday.
- **If a student has returned to placement to make up hours (outside of their usual placement weeks) they are not entitled to Bank Holiday hours. This is because the Bank Holiday hours have already been credited during the course.** A Bank Holiday during make up time is simply recorded as any other shift and the student would be expected to work their 37.5 hours during that week.

Student nurses on Placement are eligible for the statutory bank holidays listed below:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- 2 Bank Holiday Mondays in May
- August Bank Holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- **Student nurses may be concerned that due to the Bank Holidays, the total number of hours worked on placement will be less, but this is accounted for in the training plan and they are not required to make up these hours.**

Sickness and Absence

- As part of the criteria for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), all Nursing students on a three year programme must complete a minimum of 2300 hours of practice/placement hours.
- MSc (if they had completed their required hours prior to enrolment) and PgDip nursing students must complete 1800 hours practice/placement hours.

- The Pre- Registration Midwifery Standards are calculated in programmed weeks but the same principles apply. The Standards are clear that 100% attendance is required.
- **All sickness, special leave, compassionate leave and absences must** be recorded on the student's attendance record. If a student does not complete the required number of hours identified above, then this time must be made up [see making up practice hours below].

Attendance Monitoring

- The ideal is that students completing the programme attend for 100% of both the Theory and Practice requirements of the programme.
- However, it is recognised that students may face a number of challenges during the programme which require a period of sickness or special/compassionate leave.
- It is important for the student to recognise they should keep sickness and absence to a minimum as future employers are often interested in the number of days and the number occasions when sickness and/or absences have occurred.
- The University will monitor closely sickness and absence to ensure students are eligible for registration as qualified practitioners.

Reporting Sickness and Special/Compassionate Leave whilst on Placement

- It is the **responsibility of the student** to notify their Placement if they are not able to attend.
- Students must ensure that they formally notify the placement area, **using the correct local procedures**, if they unable to attend placement for any reason.
- Good practice is to call before the shift is due to start and students should ensure that a clear message is left and that a record is kept of the name of the person spoken with and the date/time of the phone call.
- Students must follow their placement providers policies and this may include calling in on each day they are not attending placement, (unless they have a medical certificate which indicates they will be off sick for a period of time).

Reporting Sickness and Special/Compassionate Leave whilst on Placement

- In addition, students should report sickness on the first day following the guidance below:

Please note that students should report both '**Practice Placement Absence**' and **Taught Session Absence**' by completing the [Student Absence Form](#). If not currently logged in to

Google Drive, clicking on the link will require the student to log in using their university email address as per the below example (**username@my.shu.ac.uk**). This will then take the student to the Sheffield Hallam University login page where they would login using their single sign on Sheffield Hallam University login details. The HWB Student Absence Google Form will then open for completion.

New Google Form [Student Absence Form](#)
Example Email Login username@my.shu.ac.uk

The image shows two side-by-side login interfaces. On the left is the Google 'Sign in' page with the text 'to continue to Forms'. The email field contains 'b2058763@my.shu.ac.uk' and is circled in red. Below it are links for 'Forgot email?' and 'Create account', and a blue 'NEXT' button. On the right is the Sheffield Hallam University login page. It has the university logo at the top and a message: 'Please enter your username and password to access the SHU systems relevant to your area of work or study. Your username and password should be the same as those you currently use to log into SHU applications.' Below this is a 'Forgotten your password?' link and two input fields: 'Username' (containing 'b2058763') and 'Password' (containing masked characters). The 'Username' field is circled in red. A 'Logon' button is at the bottom.

- The student will be prompted to complete all details required to record their sickness absence.
- If the student has been sick and this has been reported correctly, according to local and SHU policies, then this should be recorded as 'sick' [S] in the attendance record and verified by the mentor.
- If the student does not follow the correct procedures for reporting sickness to the placement, then this must be documented as 'Absent' [A] in their attendance record and verified by the mentor.
- **When returning from sickness/leave, it is important that students notify the University and the Placement Area.**
- If sickness exceeds 5 days, the student is required to submit a medical certificate to the Student Support Officer.
- **Any unauthorised absence** should be documented as a cause for concern by the mentor in the Student's Assessment documents and the link lecturer notified.
- If a student is **off sick for longer than a week** or more than once in a placement, this must also be documented as a cause for concern and link lecturer must be notified.

- Link lecturers should follow SHU **Process for dealing with Absence from the Course**, completing the required proforma [see section about consistent poor attendance].
- **Special Leave/Compassionate Leave** can only be agreed by the Student Support Officer/Course Leader or appropriate Level Manager. Students should report their absence to the placement area as described above and on the first day of absence, contact the Student Support Officer/Level manager to discuss their needs.
- **If a student is referred to the Occupational Health Department or A&E whilst on duty, please inform the appropriate Student Support Officer:**
 - [Midwifery](#)
 - [Nursing](#)
 - [Nursing \(Learning Disability\)](#)

Consistently poor attendance

- Students need to meet the NMC requirements for number of clinical hours and consistently poor attendance may mean they fail to do this.
- In addition, poor attendance may impact upon achievement of competence.
- Students with poor attendance on placement will go through the stages identified in the SHU **Process for Managing Professional Behaviour**, which is as follows:

Stage 1: Conducted by the link lecturer: Proforma 1 completed and AA informed
Stage 2: Conducted by a member of the Course Management Team
Stage 3: Conducted by the Deputy Head of Department for undergraduate programme
- The aim of this process is to ensure that the student receives the support they require as well as to ensure that they understand the long term implications of consistently poor attendance.
- **It is important to note that if attendance continues to be poor, the student may need to temporarily withdraw from the programme and join a later cohort.**
- **Or, the student can be asked to leave the course.**

Making up Practice Hours lost on Placement

- For nursing and midwifery students make up hours **must be negotiated** with their current placement whilst still on the placement. Any make up hours must be recorded on the placement time sheet. Students should aim to make up all missed shifts before the placement ends. If the student has missed more than a week of placement please see 'Making up hours in flexi weeks'.

- If any student is **off sick for longer than a week** or more than once in a placement, this must also be documented as a cause for concern and link lecturer must be notified. This is to ensure that the university can identify necessary support structures.
- Working extra shifts or hours cannot be used as a mechanism for disguising sickness and absence and all absences and make up time should be clearly indicated in the student's attendance record and verified by the mentor or Registered Practitioner supervising the student.
- At the end of the placement, all students present their attendance record, signed by their Mentor to their Academic Advisor for verification.
- If a student has returned to placement to make up hours (outside of their usual placement weeks) they are not entitled to Bank Holiday hours. This is because the Bank Holiday hours have already been credited during the course. A Bank Holiday during make up time is simply recorded as any other shift and the student would be expected to work their 37.5 hours during that week.
- **Students are expected to keep an up to date record of the clinical hours they accumulate and although the placement team will periodically produce a report highlighting those students who have not attended for the required number of practice/placement hours the students must maintain their own record.**
- If necessary students will need to make up lost clinical hours in flexi time however these opportunities are limited and will be reserved for students who cannot make up outstanding hours while on a block of placement learning. This will be supported by the appropriate university mechanisms as follows:

Making up Clinical Hours during flexi weeks

- Whilst there may be opportunities during placement allocations to make up clinical hours missed, for a variety of reasons there may be occasions when this is not feasible. Students may therefore be afforded the opportunity to make up clinical hours during flexi weeks.
- In some instances students may be able to request to make up practice/placement hours in their annual leave weeks but this must be approved by a member of the course management team and will be subject to a placement being available.
- **Students cannot organise make up time in flexi weeks or annual leave with any placement area directly.** The placements team must organise this as all other students have to be allocated a placement first.

- Students at the end of their programme must be given priority

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students CANNOT make up clinical hours during campus learning weeks. These are designated study hours and constitute part of the theoretical hours required by the NMC

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What happens if I am ill or need to be absent from my placement?

A: It is the responsibility of the student to report your first day of sickness, special/compassionate leave by contacting the Placement Area and completing the online [Student Absence Form](#).

Q: What happens if I don't complete my on-line placement time sheet?

A: Hours cannot be credited without this information. Therefore the online form must be completed and checked by your Academic Advisor at the end of each placement block. Your Academic Advisor will then insert 'checked' and the date onto the timesheet site.

Q: When filling in the attendance record and electronic time sheet for when I am on placement, should I include my breaks on shift?

A: No, please do NOT include your breaks.

Q: Am I entitled to Bank holidays while on Placement ?

A: **Nursing students YES.** When on placement, nursing students are not expected to work Statutory Bank Holidays (see list above) and should take these in addition to their days off for the week in which the Bank Holiday occurs. NB: 7.5 hours allowed for each BH

A: **Midwifery students NO.** You can only take statutory Bank Holidays as part of your normal days off. You need to work 37.5 hours each week.

Q: Why do I need to make up hours that I have missed?

A: As part of the criteria for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), students must work a specified number of hours to be eligible for registration as qualified practitioners.

Q: Does making up practice hours 'wipe out' the sickness, special/compassionate leave and absence?

A: No. This will always be maintained in the student's personal record. However, there will be on the record a note of any practice/placement make up time which has been completed.

Q: Can I schedule personal holidays whilst on placement?

A: No

Q: Can I negotiate to change holidays or request additional days with practice staff?

A: No. Attempting to do this is likely to result in disciplinary action.

Q: Can I arrange extensions or changes of my placement block directly with my mentor?

A: No.

Q: Do I have to work early shifts, long shifts, weekends, etc on placement?

A: Yes. Early shifts, late shifts, long shifts, weekends and night duty are all a part of the normal nursing and midwifery experience and your requirement to attend these shifts will depend on the rota your mentor has put together for you. Please discuss any issues you have relating to shifts with your Mentor but be aware that they do not have an obligation to accommodate your needs. It is expected that a student should work a range of shift patterns to access maximum experience.

Q: Can I make up time I have missed during my placement?

A: Yes, but only with the agreement of your mentor and Learning Environment Manager. If you have missed placement time due to illness, it may not be in your best interests, or safe for patient care, for you to then work additional hours

Q: How much time can I make up during my placement?

A: This will depend on the type of area you are working in. It is not always possible for students to work extra hours in some placement areas. We recommend you do not work more than 48 hours per week while in placement.

Q: Can I arrange to return to my Placement area to make up clinical hours missed?

A: Nursing students - No. If you are not able to make up hours missed during the placement, then make up time MUST be arranged by the placement team.

A: Midwifery students - Where any student has more than seven days' absence, the link lecturer should be informed. This is to ensure that the university can identify necessary support structures.

Q: Can I make up clinical hours missed during campus learning weeks?

A: No. These are designated study hours and constitute part of the theoretical hours required by the NMC