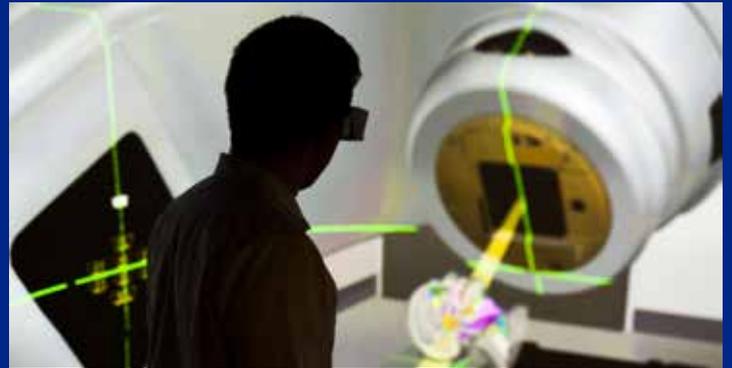


## A guide to the experience you need when applying for health and social care courses



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# What experience do I need to apply for a health and social care course?

**You need some first hand experience of care and the career you wish to pursue before you apply for any of our health and social care courses.**

We look for candidates who have the right skills, attitudes, behaviours and values to deliver high quality and compassionate person-centred care.

Having this experience helps you demonstrate an understanding of your chosen career and a commitment to that role. It also helps to ensure that you have chosen the right course.

You need to explain what you have learned from your experiences and why you are choosing a highly rewarding but demanding career.

Diagnostic radiography, radiotherapy and oncology, social work and youth and community work all have minimum care experience requirements for entry onto the course. Please see the individual course sections for more information.

We strongly recommend attending an open day to obtain advice on how to gain this experience. It is essential that we see evidence in your personal statement and at interview of what sparked your interest and made you make the step towards a career in this field. We want to see evidence that you have made a valid and considered choice.

## **What if I don't have any experience?**

You need to have gained some care experience before sending us an application form. Indicating that you are planning to undertake some experience is not enough and your application will be unsuccessful.

If you have not obtained any experience before applying, you will not be considered for a place on any of the health and social care courses.

## **Where should I go to get work experience?**

It is beneficial to gain experience from a range of settings. This will enable you to demonstrate a greater understanding of the profession in your personal statement and at interview. You will need to research the role of staff currently working in the career you have chosen.

Experience can be gained through

- paid work
- voluntary work
- placements provided on certain courses (for example, BTEC Health and Social Care)

For information about the types of settings for work experience, please refer to the guidance for the specific course you are interested in on pages 4–19, for useful links on volunteering opportunities see page 20.



# BSc (Honours) Diagnostic Radiography

## Experience required

You must have some experience in a care setting and prior knowledge **and** experience of working with or shadowing a diagnostic radiographer.

You must have either

- completed a minimum of one full day in a diagnostic imaging department or
- attended a Sheffield Hallam University recognised clinical open day in a diagnostic imaging department

We recommend you complete our workbook to help guide you through the experience. You can find a link to this in the course entry at [shu.ac.uk/611](http://shu.ac.uk/611) – click on the 'Entry requirements' tab and scroll down to 'Clinical experience'.

Nearly all hospitals are actively involved in radiography education and can usually provide opportunities to visit. You will need to contact each organisation separately to find out what they offer.

## Examples of different care settings

- diagnostic imaging departments
- hospital wards or departments – NHS or private
- outpatients departments
- hospices
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- working with vulnerable adults
- caring for people with learning needs

*'I contacted several hospitals via email and telephone both in my home town and also in Sheffield and surrounding areas. I found all my experience days useful and found that the more days I had the more questions I had to ask and the more knowledge I gained about different aspects of diagnostic imaging.'*

*Ami Cook, diagnostic radiography student*



# BSc (Honours) Midwifery

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge and experience of working with or shadowing a midwife.

It is important that you interact with women who are pregnant or have had a baby recently. It can be difficult to get hospital midwifery experience but relevant experience can be found in various settings.

Having care experience in a range of settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- local clinics
- children's centres
- GP surgeries
- Sure Start children's centres
- hospitals

'I got two types of work experience prior to starting my course. The first was in a respite home for people suffering from multiple sclerosis. My other work experience was shadowing midwives in antenatal and postnatal wards and two days with a community midwife. Being persistent really helps in getting work experience. These days were very useful as I could see exactly what midwives did in their roles so I knew exactly what I was getting into.'

*Hannah Thompson, midwifery student*



# BSc (Honours) and MSc Nursing Studies – Adult

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge of the nurses' role and work experience linked to the care of adults with health needs or a disability.

Having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- hospital wards or departments – NHS or private
- hospices
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- shadowing a community nurse
- working with a mental health charity
- victim support and user and carer groups
- working with vulnerable, homeless or abused individuals
- caring for individuals with learning needs
- substance misuse services



# BSc (Honours) and MSc Nursing Studies – Child

## Experience Required

Experience of working with children with disabilities or health issues is essential as well as knowledge of the role of a children's nurse.

Having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- hospital children's wards or departments
- hospices and respite centres that care for children
- GP surgeries
- shadowing a children's community nurse, health visitor or school nurse
- schools which provide education for children with special needs, for example learning and communication challenges, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical disabilities and developmental disorders.

Working in a nursery or mainstream school does not usually provide enough experience as you mostly interact with well children.



# BSc (Honours) and MSc Nursing Studies – Mental Health

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge of the nurses' role and work experience linked to the care of children, young people or adults with mental health needs.

Having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- hospital wards and departments caring for people with mental health issues – NHS or private
- outpatients departments
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- shadowing a community psychiatric nurse
- working with a mental health charity
- victim support and user and carer groups
- working with vulnerable, homeless or abused individuals
- caring for individuals with learning needs
- substance misuse services



# BSc (Honours) Applied Nursing (Learning Disability) and Generic Social Work

## Experience required

You must have some experience of working with children or adults who have a learning disability.

Whilst direct experience in a paid or voluntary sector is preferable, we also consider people who have cared for or supported family members with learning disabilities.

Having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- care homes and supported living, for example, residential homes for people with disabilities or older people
- Supporting individuals with learning disability as a paid carer
- working with children with a learning disability
- community projects
- school clubs
- social clubs
- befriending schemes



# BSc (Honours) Occupational Therapy and MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-reg)

## Experience required

You are required to have spent time engaging and communicating with people who have disabilities or who are in marginalised groups.

Attend Department open days, shadowing a therapist if you can and speak to occupational therapists about their role. As the profession is very broad, talking to therapists in different clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- hospital wards or departments where occupational therapy takes place – NHS or private
- mental health units
- social services
- hospices
- learning disabilities services



# BSc Operating Department Practice (ODP)

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge of the Operating Department Practitioner role and experience in a care setting.

## Examples of different settings

- surgical theatres or wards – NHS or private
- hospices
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- working with vulnerable adults
- caring for people with learning needs
- first responder for the Ambulance Service (contact the Ambulance Trust)
- life guarding



# BSc Paramedic Science

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge of the paramedic's role and we expect you to have work experience linked with pre-hospital care or acute medicine.

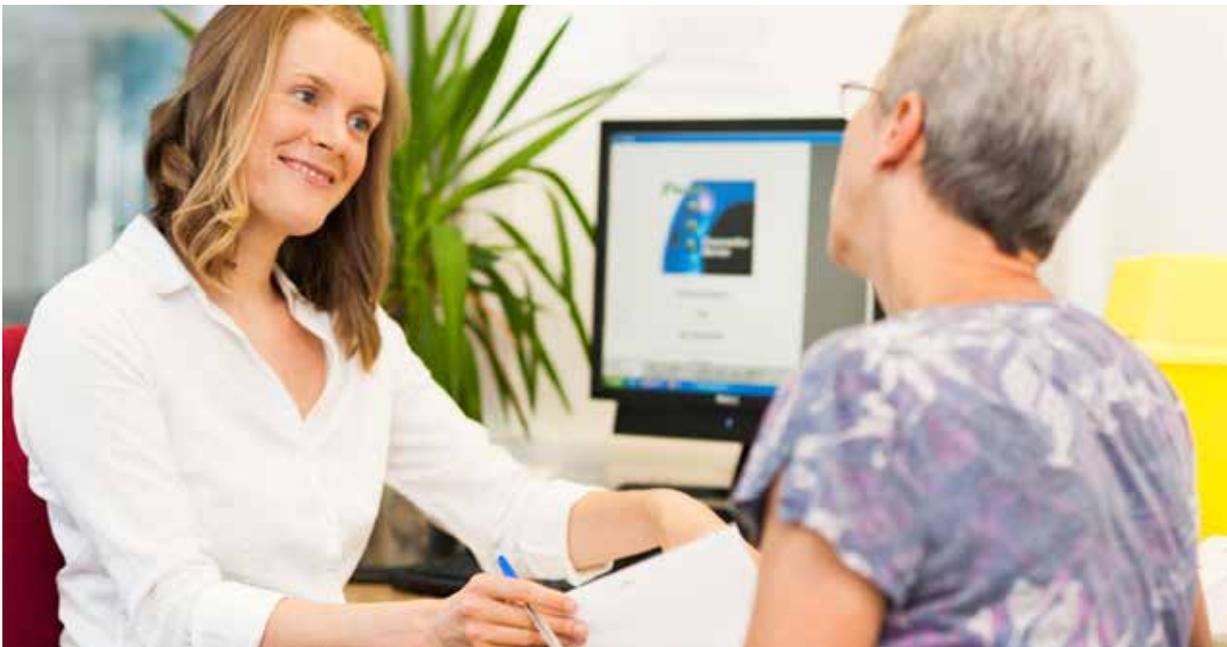
Having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different settings

- accident and emergency
- first responder for the Ambulance Service (contact the Ambulance Trust)
- first aid charities, for example the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance
- life guarding

'The experience I had was being a section medic in the Territorial Army. This gave me a basic understanding of first aid and made me decide I wanted to learn more. The TA gave me a lot of discipline and respect for others. As well as this I was a financial adviser with Royal Bank of Scotland and I believe the qualities I gained are what the University saw in me and helped me get on the course.'

*Joseph Beaumont, paramedic student*



# PgDip Physician Associate Studies

## Experience required

You are required to have some prior knowledge of the physician associate role and care experience with individuals who have health needs or a disability. Having care experience with children and adults in a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

## Examples of different care settings

- Hospital wards and departments – NHS or private
- Outpatients departments
- Nursing homes
- Clinics
- GP surgeries
- Shadowing a community health worker e.g. community psychiatric nurse
- Victim support and user and carer groups
- Working with vulnerable, homeless or abused individuals
- Caring for individuals with learning needs
- Substance misuse services
- Accident and emergency
- First responder for the Ambulance Service (contact the Ambulance Trust)
- Life guarding
- First aid charities, for example, the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance



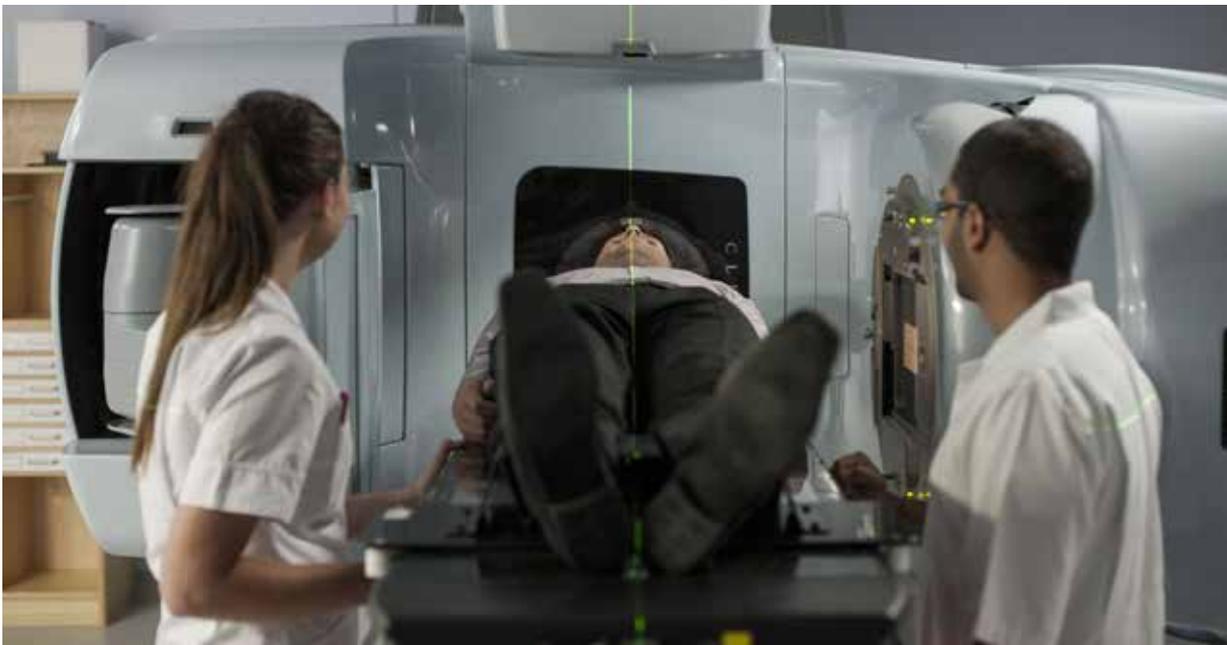
# BSc (Honours) and MSc Physiotherapy

Some experience of working in the field of physiotherapy or health care is essential, and having care experience from a range of clinical and social care settings is recommended.

Work experience could involve working with another health care professional or voluntary work in settings such as

- hospitals – NHS or private
- GP surgeries
- private physiotherapy practices
- residential homes
- mental health units
- hospices
- learning disabilities services or schools
- sports clubs

Regardless of the work experience conducted, you must have a good understanding of the role and breadth of physiotherapy and the skills needed. You can get this information from a variety of sources, including speaking to physiotherapists, workshops, open days and literature.



# BSc (Honours) Radiotherapy and Oncology

## Experience required

You must have some experience in a care setting **and** prior knowledge and experience of working with or shadowing a radiotherapist who specialises in oncology.

You must have a minimum of one full day of experience in a radiotherapy department in an NHS or private hospital (prior to your interview where possible). Before you can visit a clinical department you must fill in the department visit guidance form. You can find a link to this in the course entry at [shu.ac.uk/751](http://shu.ac.uk/751) – click on the 'Entry requirements' tab and scroll down to 'Care experience'. If you are having difficulty securing a radiotherapy placement then please contact the admissions tutor who will be able to assist.

Having more general care experience is also required.

## Examples of different care settings

- Hospital wards or departments – NHS or private
- outpatients departments
- hospices
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- working with vulnerable adults
- caring for people with learning needs



# MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology in Practice

## Experience required

You must have some experience in a care setting and prior knowledge and experience of working with or shadowing a radiotherapist who specialises in oncology.

You must have a minimum of one full day of experience in a radiotherapy department in an NHS or private hospital (prior to your interview where possible). Before you can visit a clinical department you must fill in the department visit guidance form. You can find a link to this in the course entry at [shu.ac.uk/160](http://shu.ac.uk/160) – click on the 'Entry requirements' tab and scroll down to 'Other entry requirements'. If you are having difficulty securing a radiotherapy placement then please contact the admissions tutor who will be able to assist.

Having more general care experience is also required.

## Examples of different care settings

- Hospital wards or departments – NHS or private
- outpatients departments
- hospices
- nursing homes
- clinics
- GP surgeries
- working with vulnerable adults
- caring for people with learning needs



# BA (Honours) and MSW Social Work

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge and experience of working with or supporting someone who has social support needs. We also require that you have completed a minimum of one month or 150 hours (equivalent of four weeks full-time) work in this setting.

## Examples of different settings

- care homes – such as residential homes for people with disabilities or older people
- youth clubs, play-schemes, holiday clubs, after-school clubs and nurseries
- mentoring schemes and anti-bullying schemes in schools or colleges
- working with children with a disability
- community projects
- working with a mental health charity
- victim support and user and carer groups
- working with vulnerable, homeless or abused individuals
- caring for individuals with learning needs
- substance misuse services

‘Most of my experience was from voluntary work in schools and my local community. My advice to anyone applying to university would be to make the most of any opportunity for extra experience. Even if you think it will be irrelevant, you will be surprised what you could learn from it and it will always work in your favour and show enthusiasm.’

*Hannah Scott, social work student*



# Foundation Degree Working with Children, Young People and Families

## Experience required

You must have some prior knowledge and experience of working with children or young people.

## Examples of different settings

- schools which provide education for children with special needs, for example learning and communication challenges, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical disabilities and developmental disorders
- children's centres
- nurseries
- voluntary groups
- Home Start
- play-schemes, holiday clubs, afterschool clubs and nurseries



# Top-up Degree Working with Children, Young People and Families

You must demonstrate at least 400 hours of relevant experience of working with children or young people in a paid, voluntary or caring capacity.

This work can be carried out in a variety of settings, including

- schools which provide education for children with special needs, for example learning and communication challenges, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical disabilities and developmental disorders
- children's centres
- nurseries
- voluntary groups
- health or social care settings
- Home Start
- play-schemes, holiday clubs, afterschool clubs and nurseries

# General advice

To find out more about gaining experience through local volunteer opportunities, try searching online for 'volunteer opportunities in [your area]'.

You can also find out more about volunteering opportunities on the following websites.

## **Community Service Volunteers (CSV)**

Email [information@csv.org.uk](mailto:information@csv.org.uk)  
[csv.org.uk](http://csv.org.uk)

## **vInspired (for 16–25 year olds)**

[vinspired.com](http://vinspired.com)

## **Volunteering England**

Phone 0845 305 6979  
[volunteering.org.uk](http://volunteering.org.uk)

## **Do-it**

[do-it.org.uk](http://do-it.org.uk)

## **Supporting others through Volunteer Action (SOVA)**

[sova.org.uk](http://sova.org.uk)

## **Help the Hospices**

[hospiceuk.org](http://hospiceuk.org)

Your local NHS hospital trust may offer volunteering opportunities. They may also be able to point you in the direction of relevant healthcare volunteer organisations.

If you have any questions relating to your application, please contact us.

Email [admissions@shu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@shu.ac.uk)  
Phone +44 (0)114 225 5555  
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