

Our Ref: MRRMCOVID2603

Sent via email

To:

All Undergraduate Nursing Students;
All Postgraduate Nursing Students;
All Undergraduate Midwifery Students;
All Postgraduate Midwifery Students.

CC: All Healthcare Deans.

26 March 2020

Dear nursing and midwifery students,

Your education programme and supporting patients through COVID-19

You will be all too aware of the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak is having on the NHS and the potential impact on patients, their health and their life. The Prime Minister has called this the worst public health crisis in a generation.

We know many of you have already been in contact with your university and current placement to see how your skills and experience can help. We are grateful for the drive and dedication which characterises you and characterises your chosen professions.

Last week, the Chief Nursing Officers, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Council of Deans of Health, the Royal Colleges and trade unions and the Department of Health and Social Care announced radical measures for the nursing and midwifery professions to help prepare the NHS for the challenges it now faces. Emergency parliamentary legislation is being passed to enable this to happen and today we are publishing [guidance](#) to support nursing and midwifery students. Please read this, as it will inform what you choose to do next.

Your programme progression

The pandemic is also causing disruption to your programme progression, which we know is very unsettling for you. Our colleagues at the NMC and the Council of Deans of Health are continuing to find solutions for the issues we are encountering.

Supporting our NHS

But for those of you who can, we are writing to you today to ask you to step up to support our NHS at this critical time.

Students in the final six months of their undergraduate or postgraduate pre-registration programme

You will be asked to opt-in to an arrangement whereby you move into clinical practice during this emergency period. During this emergency period, it will not be possible for students to be supernumerary. However students will receive appropriate support and supervision within an agreed delegation framework. The hours you work will contribute to your overall programme to reflect the experience you will gain during these challenging times.

You would be paid an NHS Agenda for Change Band 4 salary. Nursing students may later be able to choose to join the NMC's new Emergency COVID-19 Temporary Register and as part of a transition move to a Band 5 salary. You will still have to complete your education, including final assessments, when the pandemic abates. Student midwives will continue to work in clinical practice, supervised, but will not have the option of entering onto the emergency register because of the autonomous role of the midwife.

If you do not wish to opt into this arrangement, your university will support you to complete your programme.

Students in the second year or the first six months of their final year of their undergraduate programme and postgraduate pre-registration students not in the last 6 months of their programme

The NMC has introduced emergency Standards for that allow for changes to nursing and midwifery programmes; moving from 50:50 theory/practice split to 80:20. This provides with the option of undertaking extended period of placements for which you would be paid (NHS AfC Band 3). You do not have to opt-in to this, and your university will support you to progress in your programme in other ways if you choose not to.

Students in their first year of undergraduate programme

To our first-year students, we need you to continue developing your knowledge and skills so you are ready to join the NHS nursing workforce of the future. We know that many of you will volunteer in your communities outside of your training programme.

Next steps

We have asked your university to contact you so we can record your choice of how to proceed. Universities have already begun this task and we have asked them to **prioritise contacting third-year nursing students in the final six months of their course**. Your university will ask you to consider your options and consider the options and provide them with your answer. To undertake any of the paid elements, the NHS requires key details and key consents to allow us to link together you, your university course and the NHS placement provider. **Please wait for your university to get in touch with you and reply as soon as you can with your answer and the details they require.**

Regardless of the choices you make, you still retain the status of a 'student' and will continue to access and receive funding from the Student Loans Company (including your student loan).

If you have a school age child, we will provide you with a letter that you can provide to your child's school, certifying you are a 'key worker'.

We know this is a complex, uncertain and difficult time for you and your family. We also know that the NHS' greatest asset is its workforce, and that many of you want the opportunity to help. As a future member of that workforce, we hope you will consider volunteering through placements to use your considerable skills to help save lives.

Yours faithfully,



Ruth May

Chief Nursing Officer for England

NHS England & NHS Improvement



Professor Mark Radford

Chief Nurse

Health Education England