

# Policy on Employment of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Students

Re-endorsed by Annual Conference 2017

## **The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association recognises that:**

Many undergraduate nursing/midwifery students, who need to support themselves while studying, seek employment in health care settings.

The implementation and ongoing management of safe and ethical employment of undergraduate nursing/midwifery students must be sufficiently supported through appropriate agreements and guidelines with NSW Ministry of Health, private sector employers and universities. This employment should provide benefits to patients, the undergraduate, nurses/midwives, consumers and health services.

## **The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association adopts the policy that:**

1. The provision of employment for undergraduate nursing/midwifery students should be provided as a complement to their formal education programs to provide students with an income and increased exposure to clinical environments.
2. It is inappropriate to employ undergraduate nursing/midwifery students:
  - 2.1 as a strategy to address any perceived inadequacies of the education/clinical preparation of registered nurses and midwives;
  - 2.2 as a measure to address the nursing and midwifery shortage; or
  - 2.3 to fill registered nurse, registered midwife or enrolled nurse positions.
3. Undergraduate nursing/midwifery students may be employed as assistants in nursing/midwifery with or without a formal qualification.
  - 3.1 A minimum qualification may be required in particular settings such as within the public sector. Obtaining employment in the acute care environment as an assistant in nursing/midwifery requires a minimum:
    - a) Completion of one or more years training as an undergraduate in a recognised nursing/midwifery bachelor degree, or
    - b) Certificate III level under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) National Competency standards - Community Services or Health Training Packages (NSW Health Policy Directive 2010\_059<sup>1</sup>).
  - 3.2 Private and not-for-profit employers may further stipulate a required minimum qualification e.g. Certificate III level under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
4. The role of undergraduates employed as assistants in nursing/midwifery must occur with written authorisation of the Director of Nursing and must comply with NSW Ministry of Health's Policy Directive 2010\_059 *Employment of Assistant in Nursing (AiN) in NSW Health Acute Care*<sup>2</sup> and the *Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Practitioners made under the Public Health Regulation 2012, Schedule 3*<sup>3</sup>.



5. Undergraduates employed as assistants in nursing or midwifery assist in the provision of basic nursing care, working within a plan of care under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse or midwife. The Undergraduate Assistant in Nursing/Midwifery still remains accountable for their practice.
6. Undergraduates must work within the scope/limits of their level of knowledge and skill and within their job description provided by their employer. The Guidelines from the *NSW Health Assistant in Nursing; Working in the Acute Care Environment Health Service Implementation Package Position Description 4.1 (2009)* as a minimum should be adhered to by undergraduate nursing/midwifery students within the public sector.
7. Activities appropriate to the Assistant in Nursing are determined in consultation with the relevant senior registered nurse/midwife having regard to:
  - 7.1 the educational preparation and clinical competence of the undergraduate assistant in nursing/midwifery,
  - 7.2 the acuity of the person requiring nursing care,
  - 7.3 the level of technical skill required, and
  - 7.4 the availability of the registered nurse/midwife to provide appropriate supervision.
8. Any facility employing undergraduate nursing students must ensure that staffing and skill mix takes into account the patient case mix, dependency levels of the clinical area and how this aligns with care activities and scope of practice of the undergraduate nursing student.
9. Undergraduate nursing/midwifery students should not be employed where registered and enrolled nurses or midwives are available for employment. Priority of employment must remain with registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses.
10. Undergraduate nursing/midwifery students should not replace registered health practitioners to cover sick leave or gaps in the rostering at any time.

#### References

1. This policy should be read in conjunction with NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2010\_059 *Employment of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in NSW Health Acute Care*  
[http://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/PDS/pages/redirect.aspx?requestUrl=http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2010/pdf/PD2010\\_059.pdf](http://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/PDS/pages/redirect.aspx?requestUrl=http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2010/pdf/PD2010_059.pdf)
2. Assistants in Nursing working in the acute care environment - Health Service Implementation Package (2009)  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/workforce/Publications/ain-acute-care.pdf>
3. Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Practitioners made under the Public Health Regulation 2012, Schedule 3  
[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/phact/Documents/Code\\_of\\_Conduct\\_unregistered\\_health\\_practitioners\\_-\\_poster\\_-\\_2012\\_Regulation.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/phact/Documents/Code_of_Conduct_unregistered_health_practitioners_-_poster_-_2012_Regulation.pdf)

