



NEW SOUTH WALES NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH



POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

Re-Endorsed by Annual Conference 2020

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association
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Policy on Employment of Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Students

THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION RECOGNISES THAT:

Many undergraduate nursing and 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 these undergraduates must be sufficiently supported through appropriate agreements and guidelines with the 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 and 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 and 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 and midwifery students may be employed as assistants in nursing or 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 or midwifery requires a minimum:
 - (a) Successful completion of one or more years training as an undergraduate in a recognised nursing or midwifery bachelor degree, or

- (b) Relevant Certificate III (or higher) qualification in Health Services Assistance, for example the current course HLT33115 Certificate III Health Services Assistance (Assisting in Nursing Work in Acute Care)¹.

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.

4. Employment of undergraduates as assistants in nursing or midwifery must occur with written authorisation of the Director of Nursing/Midwifery and must comply with the NSW Ministry of Health's Policy Directive PD2018_059 *Employment of Assistant in Nursing (AiN) in NSW Health Acute Care*² and the *Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Practitioners made under the Public Health Regulation 2012, Schedule 3*³.
5. Undergraduates employed as assistants in nursing or midwifery assist in the provision of basic care, working within a plan of care under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse or midwife as appropriate. The undergraduate assistant in nursing or 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 Revised Edition Position Description 4.1 (2019)* as a minimum should be adhered to by undergraduate nursing or midwifery students within the public sector.
7. Activities appropriate to the assistant in nursing or midwifery are determined in consultation with the relevant senior registered nurse or midwife having regard to:
 - 7.1 the educational preparation and clinical competence of the undergraduate,
 - 7.2 the acuity of the person requiring nursing care,
 - 7.3 the level of technical skill required, and
 - 7.4 the availability of a registered nurse or midwife to provide appropriate supervision.
8. Any facility employing undergraduate nursing or midwifery 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.
9. Undergraduate 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 or midwifery students should not replace registered health practitioners to cover sick leave or gaps in the rostering at any time.



11. Where an employed undergraduate assistant in nursing or midwifery ceases to be an enrolled undergraduate without completing their degree, the employer should support the assistant in nursing or midwifery to obtain the relevant certificate III.

REFERENCES

1. This policy should be read in conjunction with NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2018_017 Employment of Assistants in Nursing (AIN) in NSW Health Acute Care, https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/Pages/doc.aspx?dn=PD2018_017
2. Assistants in Nursing working in the acute care environment - Health Service Implementation Package Revised Edition (2019) <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 <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/phact/Documents/coc-unregistered-practitioners.pdf>