

Deployment of student nurses during the COVID-19 emergency

Introduction

In March 2020, Health Education England (HEE) published detailed [guidance](#) for nursing and midwifery students on how they could support the NHS during the COVID-19 outbreak, and what this would mean for them. This document has been developed in partnership through the NHS Staff Council and supports the HEE guidance by providing further information for employers on job descriptions and bandings for the potential paid placements that students could be deployed into during this period.

Suitable roles

The table below sets out how students may be deployed:

Nursing students	Potential paid placement role	Job banding
Mid-programme students		
First years	None. Will remain on their education programme. This may be subject to change in response to the current situation. Students may, as now, work on bank contracts in healthcare support roles separate from their programme	
Second years	Clinical support worker Clinical support worker	Band 2* Band 3 <i>*for roles focused on personal care (see guidance)</i>
Third year students (first six months)	Clinical support worker	Band 3
Final six months students preparing for registration		
Third year student (final six months, pre-temporary registration)	Student nurse (extended clinical placement) – preparing to join the temporary register* or completing education programme in preparation for joining the full register as a registered nurse *transitory period expected to take between 4 and 8 weeks	Band 4

Third year student (final six months, on temporary register)	Pre-graduate nurse	Band 5
--	--------------------	--------

Matching and banding of job descriptions

To assist employers this document contains the following:

- Guidance on job descriptions and banding for clinical support worker paid placement roles (pages 3-4)
- Template job descriptions and banding advice for
 - Student nurse (extended clinical placement) paid placement role – band 4
 - pre-graduate nurse paid placement role – band 5 (pages 5-9).

Review

The NHS Staff Council will seek feedback from local employers and unions on the suitability of the template job descriptions and advice after an agreed period – depending on the duration of the emergency – to allow consideration of any necessary amendments to the job descriptions.

1. Mid-programme students – clinical support worker roles

This section covers the deployment of second year students, or third years in the first six months of their final year, as well as postgraduate students not in the last six months of their programme, who choose to take up this offer.

The HEE guidance states that these students will be employed in clinical practice for up to 0.8 FTE working under supervision within an appropriate delegation framework. The remaining 20 per cent of their time will be unpaid and spent in academic study.

It is recommended that employing organisations identify an appropriate job description from among their existing healthcare support worker roles, to form the basis for the job description used for these students while employed on paid placement.

Job description requirements for these student roles:

- Must be clearly labelled as for use with nursing students not in their final six months. For example, 'Clinical support worker (mid-programme nursing student)'
- Must be based on a suitable existing support worker job description with the correct banding to reflect what the student will be doing in clinical practice. These will be roles that have previously been matched to the band 2 (clinical support worker) or band 3 (clinical support worker higher level) profiles in the [combined nursing profile suite](#). The guidance set out below covering key differences between band 2 and band 3 roles will help with this.
- Must have additional elements to reflect the worker's status as a student engaged in continuing practice education and training. The guidance set out below will help with this.

Distinguishing between band 2 and band 3 clinical support roles

There are key differences between these roles.

- Band 2 roles assist with activities of personal care such as bathing, dressing and toileting, and have a level 2 knowledge requirement gained through education or equivalent experience (GCSEs).
- Band 3 roles assist with clinical activities such as taking observations and delegated testing, and have a level 3 knowledge requirement gained through education or equivalent experience level (A Levels).

In terms of NHS job evaluation (JE), the key differences between the two bands are set out in the following grid. Where JE factors are not described it is because they are identical in both profiles.

Band 2	JE level	Factor	JE level	Band 3
NP – Nursing: Clinical support worker				NP- Nursing: Clinical support worker higher level.
Level 2 – GCSE equivalent	2	Knowledge / experience	3	Level 3 – A-level equivalent.
Manoeuvring equipment (hoists, wheelchairs), bathing patients	2	Physical skills	2-3	Using clinical equipment, venepuncture, blood monitors etc.
Personal care – bathing and toileting.	3	Patient care	4	Undertakes delegated clinical duties and patient observations.
Demonstrates role to new starters	1	HR	1-2	May have some supervisory role for junior staff.
Routine work	2	Mental effort	2-3	May need to respond to emergency situations.

The overall job size is determined by the combination of these factor scores. Further information can be found in the [NHS job evaluation handbook](#).

Additional job description elements to capture requirements as a student

- The job summary/job purpose section of the job description should contain some wording to reflect the COVID-19 context and the aim of allowing students to continue their programmes.

For example:

‘This role will enable mid-programme student nurses to use the knowledge and skills they have gained on their programme to support the health and care system appropriately during the COVID-19 crisis whilst progressing their nurse education and training.’

‘Students undertaking this role will be expected to actively pursue all opportunities and use protected learning time to develop their skills, knowledge and competencies.’

- The main responsibilities section should include clauses covering working within boundaries, continuing development and balancing clinical practice with ongoing academic study.

For example:

‘Recognises and consistently works within boundaries of the role whilst developing skills, knowledge and competencies to progress their nurse education and training.’

‘Takes responsibility for balancing requirements of the job role with ongoing academic study, seeking advice and support as appropriate from practice supervisor and university.’

2. Students in their final six months

This section covers the deployment of third year students in the last six months of their final year who choose to take up this offer.

The HEE guidance states that these students will be employed in clinical practice working with appropriate support and supervision within an appropriate delegation framework. The template job descriptions provided on pages 6-9 detail the job purpose and clinical activities of the roles. They can be adapted by employers to reflect specific needs and settings. However, the NHS Staff Council advice regarding job matching and banding of these roles is based on the content of the job descriptions as published in this guide. Therefore, any major changes made locally may impact on the banding advice. As always, individual employers are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the principles of the NHS job evaluation scheme and ensure that their staff are paid fairly and equitably, even during this extraordinary time.

The NHS Staff Council’s Job Evaluation Group (JEG) has issued the advice below based on the national job profiles within the [combined nursing profile suite](#) .

This advice allows these temporary banding decisions to be confirmed for use locally by employers of the students during the COVID-19 emergency. The normal requirement for employers to match and consistency check job descriptions locally will be temporarily deferred during the emergency. Employers are advised to review this as appropriate as soon as circumstances allow.

JEG will keep its matching and banding advice under review and take account of any amendments made to the job documentation detailed below following feedback from employers.

Covid-19 student template job description	National profile matched to	Banding
Student nurse (extended clinical placement)	Associate practitioner / Nursery nurse	4
Pre-graduate nurse	Nurse	5

Template job description – Student nurse (extended clinical placement)

Job details:

Job title	Student nurse (extended clinical placement) (nursing student - final 6 months)
Pay band	4

Organisational arrangements:

Managerially accountable to:	
Reports to: Line manager name	
Professionally responsible to:	Registered practitioner (expected to be a nurse)

Job summary / job purpose:

This role enables student nurses in the final six months of their programme to use their knowledge and skills appropriately during the COVID-19 crisis whilst progressing their nurse education and training.

Students undertaking this role will be expected to:

- implement care packages under the supervision of a registered nurse for example ongoing assessment, planning, management and evaluation of care
- carry out nursing care programmes
- actively pursue all opportunities and use protected learning time to develop competencies to enable successful application to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) for future registration.

Duties / responsibilities:

1. Delivers high quality, compassionate, evidence-based care to patients following the initial assessment by the registered practitioner using person-centred approaches which promote health and independence.
2. Under supervision of the registered practitioner, ensures that all patients have appropriate individualised clinical assessments / risk assessments providing accurate feedback to the team as necessary.

3. Demonstrates effective approaches to monitoring signs and symptoms of physical, mental, cognitive, behavioural and emotional distress, deterioration or improvement and liaises with the registered practitioner in an appropriate and timely manner to review / reassess care needs as required.
4. Contributes to the ongoing assessment of the patient, providing information to inform assessments.
5. Evaluates the effectiveness of care delivered and liaises with the registered practitioner to discuss and agree changes to the plan of care as required.
6. Actively involves patients in their care, encouraging independence and supporting them to improve and maintain their mental and physical health and wellbeing.
7. Respects the privacy, dignity, needs, beliefs, choices and preferences of patients and carers.
8. Obtains the appropriate consent for the identified care to be undertaken, ensuring the patient / client has a good understanding and knowledge of the decision-making process and is provided with accurate and appropriate information.
9. Maintains clear and accurate patient records using both digital and paper-based records.
10. Recognises and effectively responds to emergency situations escalating support from the registered practitioner in a timely and appropriate manner.
11. Works in accordance with local policy and practice, including safeguarding and raising concerns.
12. Uses a wide range of communication methods, including verbal, non-verbal and written, to interact with a variety of individuals including patients, carers, and members of the multi-professional team in a manner which is safe, effective, compassionate and respectful.
13. Works as an effective member of the multi-disciplinary team, actively promoting team and interdisciplinary relationships.
14. Provides support and guidance to other staff as appropriate, e.g. support workers within the clinical area.
15. Recognises and consistently works within boundaries of the role and their acquired skills and knowledge whilst developing competencies to progress their nurse education and training for example skills in leadership and medicines management.

Template job description – Pre-graduate nurse

Job details:

Job title	Pre-graduate nurse (nursing student – final six months)
Pay band	5

Organisational arrangements:

Managerially accountable to:	
Reports to: Line manager name	
Professionally responsible to:	Registered practitioner (expected to be a nurse)

Job summary / job purpose:

This role will enable student nurses in the final six months of their programme to work with temporary NMC registration and use their knowledge and skills appropriately during the COVID-19 crisis.

Students undertaking this role will be expected to:

- work in accordance with the NMC Code of Practice for nurses, midwives and nursing associates
- comply with conditions of registration for students on the temporary NMC register
- complete a preceptorship package
- take responsibility for the assessment, planning, delivery and evaluation of nursing care under the delegated authority of a fully registered nurse
- work autonomously in areas of clinical practice where assessed as competent and appropriately signed off, while actively seeking advice and supervision as necessary
- actively pursue all opportunities and use protected learning time to develop and consolidate competencies to prepare for successful application to the NMC for full registration.

Duties / responsibilities

1. Delivers high quality, compassionate, evidence-based care to patients using a broad range of clinical interventions and person-centred approaches which promote health and independence.
2. Works autonomously and is accountable for own clinical practice in line with temporary NMC registration, ensuring professional supervision from a fully registered nurse when required.
3. Recognises and works within the limits of competence, actively seeking to develop own skills and knowledge and those of other members of the nursing team.
4. Ensures that all patients have appropriate individualised clinical assessments / risk assessments, providing accurate feedback to the team as necessary.
5. Demonstrates effective approaches to monitoring signs and symptoms of physical, mental, cognitive, behavioural and emotional distress, deterioration or improvement and reviews / reassesses care needs as required.
6. Evaluates the effectiveness of care assessment and delivery and discusses and agrees changes to the plan of care as required.
7. Undertakes safe management and administration of medicines within limits of assessed competence.
8. Actively involves patients in their care, encouraging independence and supporting them to improve and maintain their mental and physical health and wellbeing.
9. Respects the privacy, dignity, needs, beliefs, choices and preferences of patients and carers.
10. Obtains the appropriate consent for the identified care to be undertaken, ensuring the patient / client has a good understanding and knowledge of the decision-making process and is provided with accurate and appropriate information.
11. Maintains clear and accurate patient records using both digital and paper-based records.
12. Recognises and effectively responds to emergency situations using escalation protocols in a timely and appropriate manner.
13. Works in accordance with local policy and practice, including safeguarding and raising concerns.
14. Demonstrates excellent communication and negotiation skills in situations which may be highly sensitive and emotive, underpinned by the principles of data protection, dignity and confidentiality.
15. Works as an effective member of the multi-disciplinary team, actively developing team and interdisciplinary relationships.
16. Provides support, guidance, training and supervision to other staff as appropriate, e.g. support workers within the clinical area.
17. Takes responsibility for pursuing acquisition of expertise by developing and embedding skills, knowledge and competencies needed to complete nurse education and prepare for joining the permanent NMC register.