

**BSc (Hons) Midwifery**

**Placement Handbook  
2023/2024**

**Midwifery Programme Team**

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For brevity, the terms woman/women and the pronouns she/her/hers will be used throughout this programme guidance to represent anyone who is pregnant or giving birth, regardless of their gender identity. It is assumed that the care of a transgender or nonbinary person would involve a discussion about preferred pronouns and terminology and that this would be communicated to all of the healthcare team.

## Introduction

Midwifery is a practice-based profession. The office of a midwife has been recognised in all societies and the role has evolved through centuries to the independent accountable practitioner of today.

The essential values and beliefs on which the BSc (Hons) Midwifery programme is founded, are inextricably linked to the philosophy of midwifery care. This is recognised as the provision of a safe environment in which the woman's individual physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs can be explained and expressed and wherever possible met. The midwife should be committed to take a leading role in providing this care in a sensitive and comprehensive service, which should be easily accessible and acceptable to the population. The appropriate care and preparation prior to, throughout and following childbirth has positive effects on the health and well-being of women and their families. To this end the education and preparation of competent midwife practitioners is seen as essential to the provision of this philosophy of high-quality care which is vibrant and creative.

The overarching philosophy of the programme is to enable those entering and progressing through the programme as expressed in the definition above to develop from a lay-person or novice into a professional who can competently comply with the activities of a midwife as required by the [Standards for education and training Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes](#) (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2023)

In particular, it is focused on the acquisition and use of clinical knowledge through the spiral curriculum and student-centred learning approaches of enquiry-based learning. Experience in the clinical area supported by the theoretical content of the modules in the programme provided by personal study and timetabled sessions. The term lay person/novice on entry to the programme is used as the majority of course members have a diverse range of prior life skills and experiences with very few coming from a healthcare background. They do; however, all share a strong enthusiasm for learning about midwifery and participating in practice. It is a statutory requirement for the midwife to be competent at the point of qualification to undertake the expected role. The philosophy of the programme is to ensure that not only is competency achieved but that following qualification the midwife is enabled to progress through to become an expert practitioner and appropriate role model. The appreciation by the student of the need for lifelong learning is also a priority to enable the midwife to adapt to the demands changing care provision exerts.

## Activities of a Midwife

UK countries shall ensure that midwives are at least entitled to take up and pursue the following activities:

- to provide sound family planning information and advice
- to diagnose pregnancies and monitor normal pregnancies.
- to carry out examinations necessary for the monitoring of the development of normal pregnancies
- to prescribe or advise on the examinations necessary for the earliest possible diagnosis of pregnancies at risk to provide a programme of parenthood preparation and a complete preparation for childbirth including advice on hygiene and nutrition.
- to care for and assist the mother during labour and to monitor the condition of the foetus in utero by the appropriate clinical and technical means.
- to conduct spontaneous deliveries including where required, an episiotomy and in urgent cases a breech delivery.
- to recognise the warning signs of abnormality in the mother or infant which necessitate referral to a doctor and to assist the latter where appropriate.
- to take the necessary emergency measures in the doctor's absence, in particular, the manual removal of the placenta, possibly followed by a Manual examination of the uterus.
- to examine and care for the new-born infant; to take all initiatives which are necessary in case of need and to carry out where necessary immediate resuscitation.
- to care for and monitor the progress of the mother in the post-natal period and to give all necessary advice to the mother on infant care to enable her to ensure the optimum progress of the new-born infant.
- to carry out the treatment prescribed by a doctor.
- to maintain all necessary records

The role of midwife covers several facets: clinician, educator, manager, and researcher. In order, to fulfil the multifaceted role a midwife, like other comparable professionals, should bring to bear the broad range of key skills and attitudes normally developed in a graduate. In addition, specialised knowledge, interpersonal skills, and leadership are required in day-to-day practice.

All undergraduate programmes are carefully structured to provide an integrated balance of theory and practice. Placements are arranged in variety of health and social care settings, enabling students to gain insight and confidence in the practical aspects of their chosen profession.

# Allocation of Practice Placements

Throughout the three years, you will be provided with practice placements that facilitate your development of midwifery core skills and the achievement of the learning outcomes as outlined in each year of the Student assessment document, the Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (MORA).

Whilst recognising that health care is increasing being delivered in Community Settings (DH 2010), you will have the opportunity to deliver midwifery care in the community, home, birth units and hospital settings. A varied number of learning opportunities will therefore be possible during these allocations to meet the required learning outcomes within different care settings and prepare you for your midwifery career.

In order, to provide you with this variation, midwifery students at UWE, are expected to travel to placements areas across the region. We will try to keep you in your primary placement area (PPA) for each given year of the programme; but due to the nature of the programme and in order for you to achieve the practice experiences required for registration, it is not possible to guarantee all placements will be geographically close to where you live.

In order to meet the requirements of the latest National recommendations and to ensure students experience different Trusts, part of the programme may take place in a trust that is not your primary placement area.

All placements have been audited to ensure that they meet your learning needs, and you can contribute by completing placement evaluations after each placement block.

**Specialist placement weeks** and **Hub and Spoke** placements are also part of the placement experience. Students can plan their own placement weeks as part of the specialist weeks or plan individual shifts as part of the hub and spoke opportunity in areas they wish to explore further that aren't part of the normal placement journey. Specialist placement weeks will also compliment the concept of Continuity of Care enabling the students to explore settings utilised by a woman in her pregnancy journey.

Students allocated a placement for which travel, or accommodation may be necessary are advised to make an appointment with a student advisor to discuss their eligibility for claiming travel and accommodation costs.

## Primary Placement Areas

Placement Providers Include:

### A) Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust ([GHNHSFT](#)) includes:

- Gloucester Royal Hospital

- Athena Birth Centre at Cheltenham General Hospital
- Stroud Maternity Unit
- Community Hubs across the Gloucestershire zone including; Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud, the Forest of Dean, Tewksbury, Cotswolds and Cirencester.

## B) North Bristol

North Bristol NHS Trust ([NBT](#)) includes:

- Southmead Hospital
- Cossham Birth Centre
- Community Hubs across the North Bristol zone

## C) Bristol and North Somerset

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust ([UHBW](#)) includes:

- St Michaels Hospital
- Ashcombe Birth Unit at Weston General Hospital
- Community areas across the Bristol and North Somerset zone

## D) Bath and North East Somerset

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust ([RUH](#)) includes:

- Royal United Hospital Bath
- Birth Centres at Chippenham and Frome
- Community areas across the Bath and North East Somerset zone

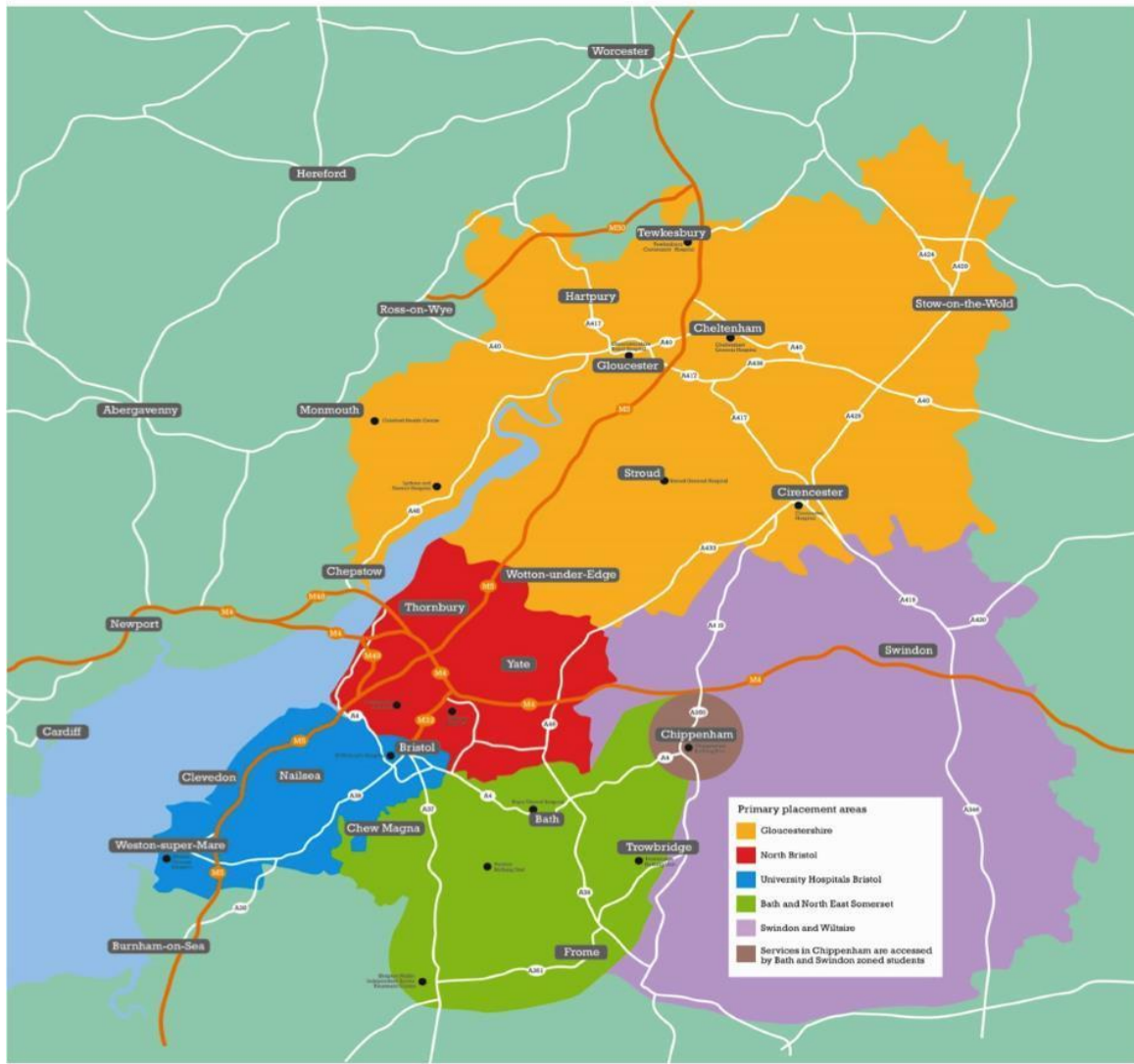
## E) Swindon

Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust ([GWH](#)) includes:

- Great Western Hospital
- Whitehorse Birth unit
- Chippenham Birth centre
- Community areas across the Swindon and Marlborough zone including some cross over into Bath and North East Somerset birth centres (see above)

A primary placement area is a geographical grouping of placements based on the counties and unitary authorities of the West of England. Midwifery has its own identified zones, providing the student with a full and comprehensive range of practice experience within the Trusts and community.





## Mandatory Training

### Trust Induction

It is expected that all midwifery students will attend a Mandatory Trust or organisation led specific induction before going into clinical practice in Year 1 and attendance at an induction is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in you not being allowed to start placement. Trust inductions include essential information relating to health and safety, personal safety, IT access, local Trust policies (for example, administering medication) and dress code. You may have to attend further Trust inductions throughout your placement if you are placed in another NHS Trust, for example.

### Mandatory Skills and Requirements

Prior to commencing placements, the following mandatory requirements must have been completed. Your practice module leader will signpost you to the relevant learning resources and mandatory training session will be available through your timetable.

### Year 1 students

- Manual Handling
- Numeracy
- Basic Life Support /Paediatric Life support
- Neonatal life Support
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance
- Occupational Health (OH) clearance (including being up to date with all vaccinations.)
- Medicines Management
- Safeguarding lecture

Failure to attend will result in the delayed commencement of placement and professional suitability proceedings. Must be completed in year one, signed off by your APT at your end of year meeting.

### Years 2 & 3 students – annual mandatory updates

- Manual Handling
- Numeracy
- Basic Life and
- Neonatal life Support
- Medicines Management
- Safeguarding

Failure to attend will result in the delayed commencement of placement and professional suitability proceedings. Must be completed, signed off by your APT each year.

Additionally:

- An online annual Good Health and Good Character Declaration at the start of years 2 and 3. Any changes to Health that may impact on your ability to complete the outcomes in practice must be declared. An Occupational Health assessment may be required to assess fitness for practice and to ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments are made. Trust induction (if moving to a new organisation).  
Must be completed in years 2 and 3, signed off by your APT at your end of year meetings.

### Returning students

Occupational health clearance may also be a requirement of returning to the programme from a period out, illness or a back injury. A full DBS may also be required, depending on length of time away from the programme.

Annual Mandatory updates:

- Manual Handling
- Numeracy
- Basic Life Support

- Neonatal life Support
- Medicine management
- Safeguarding
- Trust induction if returning to a new trust

Failure to attend will result in the delayed commencement of placement.

Additionally:

- An online annual Good Health and Good Character Declaration at the start of years 2 and 3.
- Any changes to health that may impact on your ability to complete the outcomes in practice must be declared.
- An Occupational Health assessment may be required to assess fitness for practice. • Trust induction (if moving to a new organisation)

Must be completed in years 2 and 3, signed off by your APT.

## Clinical Practice Placement Expectations

### Working with your practice supervisor in practice

"All students on an NMC approved programme must be supervised while learning in practice" (NMC 2018). All NMC registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates are capable of supervising students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice. Students may be supervised by other registered health and social care professionals. Your allocated practice supervisor/practice assessor will complete your MORA document.

### Tips for a successful placement

It is your responsibility to learn as much as possible whilst on placement, and although some of the following tips seem obvious, they increase your chance of success.

## Summary of student responsibilities for practice learning

### Before practice learning starts

- When you have obtained details of your practice learning setting on ARC, contact the allocated clinical supervisor and Practice assessor, at least two weeks before the starting date.
- When you make the initial contact introduce yourself, confirm starting date and time and clarify your allocated working hours, dress code, car parking and access plans.

- Consider your travelling arrangements.
- Ensure you understand the specific expectations of your allocated practice placement/practice learning setting by accessing and reading appropriate documents.
- Make sure you are familiar with your assessment documentation, the proficiencies you need to achieve and what the university expects of you for each placement. Use the Midwifery Ongoing Record of Achievement (MORA) to identify the proficiencies you need and record your plans to achieve whilst on placement. (This will enable the first discussion with your practice assessor)

### During practice learning

- Uphold the Nursing and Midwifery Council Code (NMC 2018)
- Be friendly, enthusiastic, and professional in your manner
- Meet with your practice assessor as soon as possible to discuss your learning needs and the clinical staff's expectations
- Be willing to participate in care and help your colleagues
- Ask for help when you need it. Always admit when you do not know something
- Be punctual and adhere to the area's dress code, policies & procedures
- Get to know the clients, staff and personnel allied to the placement area
- Take advantage of any learning opportunities internal and external to the placement area
- Find out what learning opportunities are available to you outside the placement area and take advantage of them
- Reflection is a valuable learning tool, so take the opportunity to reflect on your experiences e.g. with peers; with your practice assessor; keeping a reflective diary
- Ask appropriate questions
- Read the area's student literature
- Discuss any concerns with the staff as and when they arise
- When it is quiet, or if you are unsure whether there is anything you can do to help, ask the staff what you can do
- Contact the Practice Support Line as soon as possible if you are having problems
- Adopt a questioning and reflective approach to your learning to increase self-awareness, confidence, and competence
- Where appropriate give and receive constructive feedback  
Consider experiences from clinical practice to share at work-based learning days or during reflection on practice sessions at UWE.

### Other information

- Seek help from UWE student advisers, if issues such as finance, accommodation or personal issues are impinging on your practice learning (Student Information Point)
- Comply with the UWE sickness and absence policy, and the Trust/Organisations reporting arrangements.

- Constructively evaluate the placement itself, using the UWE approved online evaluation at the end of each placement.
- Act always, in accordance with Health and Safety regulations
- Maintain confidentiality about service users and documentation.
- Work within the NMC Code (2018)

### Attendance on shifts

You must report any periods of sickness or absence to your allocated practice placement area and UWE Practice Placement Office (PPO) Telephone: (0117 328 3283) E-mail: [practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk)

When on placement students may be asked to provide their contact, telephone numbers because managers are concerned about their safety as lone workers (book on delivery suite in all zones). Students are advised that it is at their own discretion to do so but that they should be guided by the placement's protocols.

As part of the case loading, it is imperative the birthing areas have student contact details, details which **MUST NOT** be shared directly with women or their families. There is a designated address book in each birthing area for students to complete contact details.

Any hours / weeks missed in clinical practice will need making up before the end of the programme, to comply with the NMC requirements of a midwifery programme of study. At the end of each year missing hours can be made up during the extended placement time if the placement area is available. this will be facilitated by the Co-programme lead.

### Can I go early

Placement staff may choose to let you go home early. If they do, please be appreciative and do not assume you will do this every shift. Beware asking to leave early as it may appear to the staff that you are not interested in learning and are not committed to your course. This may also affect the hours required to meet the NMC standards ensure you record all hours accurately.

### Supernumerary status in clinical placement

Students have supernumerary status and as such, you are not counted as part of the clinical staffing numbers.

### Shift patterns/ duty rosters

Shifts are rostered by your clinical area student lead for the clinical placement area. You should be mindful of the needs of other students on placement with you and ensure that requests for weekends or nights are fair.

Under the working time directives, you are entitled to 2 days off a week, but these may not be consecutive. You must also have an 11-hour rest period within a 24-hour period. Working time directives mean that you should not work more than 48 hours a week, normally averaged over 17 weeks. (GOV UK)

You will need to work shifts whilst on clinical placement. You will be expected to work weekends (Saturday and Sunday).

You will also be expected to work night shifts. You should not do more than 3 consecutive night shifts. You should not be expected to work a night shift which ends on the morning of a scheduled university day, or starts in the evening of a university day, including work based clinical seminar learning sessions.

You will be expected to work the shift pattern adhered to by the placement, however in some placement areas, you may be required to work a different shift length to the registered staff.

- Long day Shift (12 hours) – for example 07.30-20.00 or 19.30 – 08.00 (30-minute break)
- Traditional day shift – for example 07.30-15.30 or 13.45-21.15 or any variation of a 7.5hour shifts (30-minute Break)
- Night shifts – for example 21.00-08.00 (30-minute break)

The working week is 37.5 hours, and you should not work more than 150 hours in a 4-week period.

The midwifery programme is approved against practice learning hours and not practice working hours, recognising that there is potential for learning either through conversation, reading, reflecting or completing documentation during your breaks. Therefore, you should record start and finish times on your timesheets and leave the section which records your breaks blank or enter a value of zero.

As is the expectation for registered staff and to meet the NMC requirements, you will be expected to manage personal responsibilities / competing demands to ensure you can attend rostered shifts.

You are expected to follow the shift pattern of your assigned practice supervisor but may in exceptional circumstances, request to alter a shift. Permission to change your shift is granted at the discretion of the midwife responsible for co-ordinating student off-duty. Your practice supervisor is not obliged to grant your request. It is important that you make the most of placement opportunities in order to make the necessary links between theory and practice to enable you to meet NMC pre-registration midwifery standards against which you will be assessed.

### Work based Clinical Seminar sessions.

During practice placements the link between theory and practice will be enhanced by prescribed work-based clinical seminar sessions in your zoned (practice) area on certain weeks of the academic year. These sessions will use your clinical experience as a trigger to review and consolidate your learning, and as a springboard for further exploration and discovery. The philosophy that underpins the curriculum not only recognises the importance of a programme of preparation that is practice centred but acknowledges the need to promote the integration of theory and practice for the achievement of professional competence.

The work-based clinical seminar sessions aim at strengthening this theory practice integration in a number of ways:

- expanding the opportunity for students to develop independence, autonomy, flexibility, and reflective thinking
- using real life scenarios to facilitate student learning
- accessing sources of information to support midwifery practice as it is delivered
- Students can invite practice staff to share their expertise.

The focus of the Work Based Clinical Seminar sessions will be on incidents emerging from practice. These could range from broad situations such as advocacy and empowerment to specific case studies. They will also include skills to enhance practice. What is important is they are deemed appropriate to the learning outcomes of the Professional Practice module the student is undertaking. Since these Work Based Clinical Seminar sessions occur within each practice placement experience, more information about the dates and organisation of these days will be contained within the relevant cohort programme site and blackboard.

Attendance is compulsory and absence requires you to contact your Academic Personal Tutor. You must ensure you are on days not nights.

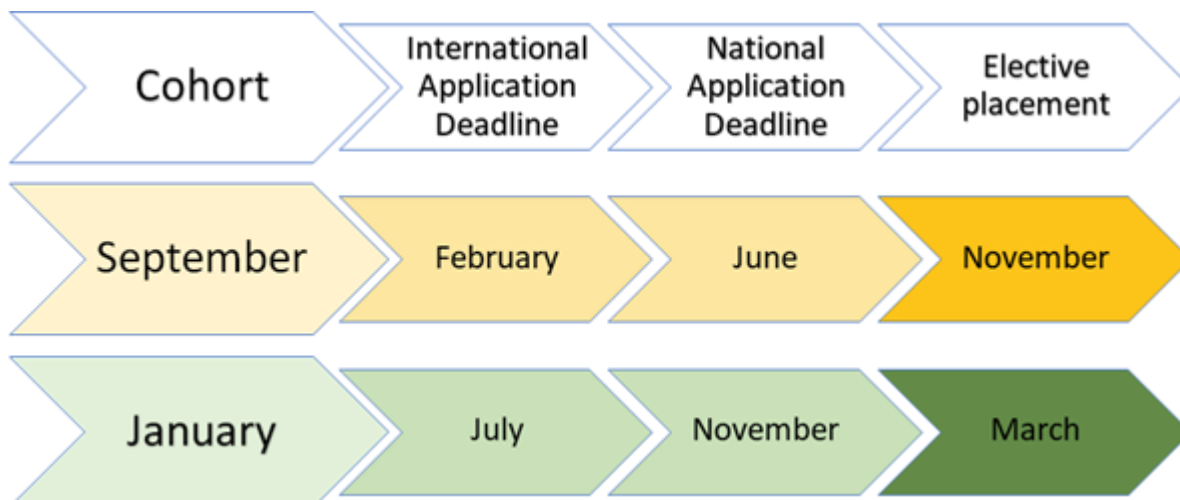
## Elective Placements

UWE Bristol Midwifery students are given the opportunity to opt for an elective placement, which takes place in the first placement block of year 3. Elective placements enable midwifery students the opportunity to enrich their learning, become globally engaged and to develop and flourish both personally and professionally. This is considered to be a highly valued learning opportunity.

Some students have chosen to travel with a dedicated company such as 'Work the World' or 'Plan my Gap Year', whilst others are travelling independently or will be based within a UK charity or NHS trust. More information on available options will be discussed during an introductory presentation.

### Applying for an elective placement

All students will receive a presentation (given by the electives leads) in year 2 induction week, outlining opportunities available and how to apply. Each cohort Blackboard site has an electives page where a copy of the presentation, application form, risk assessment form and all other relevant information can be found. The infographic below provides a timeline of the application deadlines:



The application form requires APT sign off. There is a criteria that students must;

- Have had less than 14 days sick time
- Must have passed all modules
- Must not have been subject to Professional Suitability Policy

Applications are then submitted to the elective leads where a process of approval takes place by the elective committee. Dates of the elective placement will be passed to the placement office to ensure placement areas are aware of the planned elective.

### Insurance

UWE provides indemnity (including medical malpractice) and travel insurance for both national and international electives, assuming: the course is part of their studies, and is approved by UWE. However, we do recommend you take out personal travel insurance for complete cover. There is no requirement to take out RCM insurance. Of note, UWE insurance will not cover you if you undertake any extreme sports or have an accident while intoxicated.



## **Timesheets**

As in the UK, online timesheets will be completed on ARC and authorised by the elective host directly working with the student. Students are expected to work an average of 37.5 hours per week.

## **Student requirements**

### **Learning objectives:**

1. Critically observe, explore and evaluate the role and scope of midwifery in a range of settings from a global and national perspective.
2. Demonstrate high levels of professional conduct in line with the NMC Code of practice whilst acting as a UWE Bristol midwifery student ambassador.
3. Critically reflect on effective, personalised and respectful midwifery care that meets the needs of women, their families and their newborn infants from a global and national perspective.
4. Compare and critically analyse the differences and similarities of UWE Bristol local trust practices with their own elective placement locations.
5. Understand and appreciate the influencing factors of culture, political and social policies in healthcare and its impact on safe maternity care.

Students will be supernumerary and are advised to work in an observational capacity if based in a non-UK setting but if they are based in a UK NMC SSSA approved centre, they can participate in care where appropriate and within the student's scope of practice. The elective placements are *not* assessed; therefore proficiencies cannot be signed off.

The following requirements set out student elective placement expectations:

### **Reflective diary**

A midwifery elective teams page has been set up to enable students and their 'long-arm' practice supervisors (elective leads) to communicate throughout the elective placement. Students are required to keep a reflective diary and upload one entry per week onto the teams page. Students can also network digitally with their peers and share pictures and experiences.

### **Feedback**

The student will request feedback from their elective hosts to highlight the work they have been doing and to comment on their professional behaviour as a UWE Bristol midwifery ambassador. This can be uploaded to the MORA (midwifery ongoing record of achievement) and can be reviewed by their practice and academic assessors.

### **Presentation**

On return, students will provide a 10-minute presentation to their student midwifery peers and the midwifery lecturing team, outlining their elective experiences and reflections on their learning.

For more information, please email the midwifery elective leads;

[HAS-Electives@uweacuk.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:HAS-Electives@uweacuk.onmicrosoft.com)

# Exposure Prone Procedures – Advice for Midwifery Students

The below is adapted from Public health England, 2017: 'Emergency healthcare workers, exposure prone procedures (EPPs) and the exposure prone environment advice.'

The majority of clinical procedures (including many which are invasive) in the healthcare setting pose no risk of transmission of blood borne viruses (BBVs) from an infected Health Care Worker (HCW) to a patient (or vice versa) and can be safely performed, **provided that appropriate infection prevention and control precautions are adhered to scrupulously at all times**. Those procedures where an opportunity for transmission of BBV does exist are described as exposure prone, where injury to the HCW could result in the worker's blood contaminating the patient's open tissues (or vice versa). This is described as "bleed-back".

Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs) include procedures where the worker's gloved hands may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space, where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times. The definition of EPPs given above embraces a wide range of procedures, in which there may be very different levels of risk of bleed-back. A risk-based categorisation of clinical procedures has been developed, including procedures where there is negligible risk of bleed-back (Category 0) and three categories of EPPs with increasing risk of bleed-back (see below).

## Category 0 (negligible risk of bleed back)

Those procedures where the hands and fingertips of the worker are visible and outside the patient's body at all times, and internal examinations or procedures that do not involve possible injury to the worker's gloved hands from sharp instruments and/or tissues. These procedures are considered not to be exposure prone **provided routine infection prevention and control procedures are adhered to at all times**.

## Category 1

Procedures where the hands and fingertips of the worker are usually visible and outside the body most of the time and the possibility of injury to the worker's gloved hands from sharp instruments and/or tissues is slight. This means that the risk of the HCW bleeding into a patient's open tissues should be remote.

## Category 2

Procedures where the fingertips may not be visible at all times but injury to the worker's gloved hands from sharp instruments and/or tissues are unlikely. If injury occurs it is likely to be noticed and acted upon quickly to avoid the HCW's blood contaminating a patient's open tissues. Emergency Healthcare Workers, Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs) and the Exposure Prone Environment 7

### Category 3

Procedures where the fingertips are out of sight for a significant part of the procedure, or during certain critical stages, and in which there is a distinct risk of injury to the worker's gloved hands from sharp instruments and/or tissues. In such circumstances it is possible that exposure of the patient's open tissues to the HCW's blood may go unnoticed or would not be noticed immediately.

Pre-requisites that must be fulfilled prior to procedures being carried out are:

- Occupational Health (OH) immunisation programme complete, and OH status known
- Theoretical training in UWE complete
- Informed consent of client
- Support of practice supervisor /practice assessor
- Obligatory e-learning complete (Trust specific)

Practice must include the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize the risk of injury. Examples of PPE to mitigate risk include:

- visor or goggles
- mask
- protective clothing such as surgical gown, disposable apron
- clinical gloves
- appropriate protective footwear

PROCEDURE	RISK	TIME-FRAME
Venepuncture	Category 1	Year 1
Cannulation	Category 1	Year 2
Giving injections	Category 1	Year 1
Vaginal examination	Category 0	Year 1
Artificial rupture of membranes (ARM)	Category 2	Year 2
Application of fetal scalp electrode (FSE)	Category 2	Year 2
Birth*	Category 0	Year 1
Observational role in theatre*	Category 0	Year 1
Active role in theatre	Category 2	Year 1

Perineal Inspection**	Category 0	Year 1
Suturing**	Category 3	Year 2
Insertion and removal of catheter	Category 0	Year 1
Rectal examination / administration of drugs per rectum (PR)	Category 0	Year 1
Newborn blood sampling (SBR / BM newborn blood spot)	Category 1	Year 1
Maternal and neonatal swabs	Category 0	Year 1
Exposure to body fluids, either maternal or neonatal i.e. changing nappies, changing maternity pads	Category 0	Year 1
Urinalysis*	Category 0	Year 1

\*Splash risk

\*\*Suturing only undertaken under direct (visual) supervision, following theoretical training

## A – Z Frequently Asked Questions

### Absence

Absence during practice You should email [practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk) or call 0117 32 83283 and leave a message with your name, contact number, current placement details and reason for your absence. Calls are not routinely returned from this number. If you wish to speak to someone, you should call the Practice Support Line on 0117 32 81152. Any absence from practice will need to be made up before the end of the course. You may make up missed shifts in any placement block, annotating your time sheets as extra hours.

### Monitoring of absence

Where non-attendance is giving concern students will, in the first instance, discuss the nature of such absence with their Academic Personal Tutor (APT) and, thereafter, with the Programme Leader and / or the Lead Midwife for education (LME).

Students who do not advise the faculty of the reason for their absence and / or fail to submit medical certificates, when appropriate, may be discontinued from the programme.

Failure to meet the attendance criteria for clinical practice elements of the course may result in registration delay or being unable to register as a qualified midwife.

### **Access plans**

An Access Plan is an informal meeting, designed to give the student an opportunity to discuss their needs around placements and any support or reasonable adjustments that could be put in place including access to the placement, parking and travel, the working day including shifts and nights/weekend work. It may also cover equipment and documentation and anything else that is relevant to their learning experience on placement. Following the meeting, a short report will be written by the Disability Advisor, which will be circulated to everyone present at the meeting. It is then the responsibility of the student to show this report to the appropriate staff members whilst on placement in order for any support and adjustments to be put in place. If you feel that you may benefit from having an access plan, please contact your APT in the first instance.

### **Accident reporting in practice**

If you have an accident in practice, you must follow the Trust's local Accident policy. You should also ensure that the incident is reported to the University by using the [UWE online accident report form](#). You may wish to contact your APT/AiP to support you with this. See also 'needlestick injury'.

### **Accommodation for placements**

Some students can arrange accommodation for placements if they are unable to travel to placement daily. Please contact the Student Advisors via the Information Points to find out if this is applicable to you.

### **Adoption Support Leave**

See [UWE Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave](#).

### **Adverse weather (snow / flooding)**

Students should check the university website for advice on University closures. Students should also check local radio for travel information. Although University sites may be closed during adverse weather conditions, your placement is unlikely to be closed. As students you should make safe and reasonable efforts to attend your shift. However, there will be times when you will be unable to do so.

If this is the case:

- Ring the placement and let them know. They may ask if you could make a different shift start time. If you think this is possible then you should.
- Notify the Practice Absence Reporting Line. If for any reason you are unable to attend your practice placement please call the number given to you in induction week and leave your name, student number and location of your practice placement. They will not return your call but your absence will be recorded.
- Because the University is closed, your absence will be counted as "Authorised Absence" and recorded as such. It will be added to any time you have to make up at the end of the programme

### **Annual leave policy**

All annual leave is fixed during the 3 years of the programme and students are unable to take annual leave outside of these times. If annual leave is taken outside of the allocated periods, this could be construed as unprofessional behaviour, and may result in investigation under the Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy.

Bank holidays are pre-set according to your programme of study. This is non-negotiable and as a student you cannot request additional annual leave to manage child/ carer responsibilities. If your practice placement falls during Bank Holiday periods such as Good Friday, Easter Monday, May and August Bank Holidays, you may be scheduled to work on these days as normal, however this is not mandated by the University. If you wish to not work on a scheduled Bank Holiday, you will need to make up the hours at another time. Hours worked on these days are counted as normal placement hours and not as enhanced or extra hours.

The only exception to the bank holidays rule on the midwifery course are Christmas Day, Boxing day and New Year you will not be scheduled to work these days.

### **ARCPOW**

ARC is a web-based system that provides access for students to their placement and absence details with the ability to update their contact information online. This is where you will be notified of your next placement, usually with 6 weeks notice.

You can use ARC to; complete the self-declaration of good health and good character, evaluate your previous placement (to release placement details of the next) and it records the number of practice hours you have completed.

### **Authorised absence**

Can be granted by your APT for hospital appointments and carer emergencies and is arranged in advance (or on the day for emergencies), this time will need to be made up.

Compassionate leave (up to 5 days) can be authorised by your APT, this time will need to be made up.

Jury service – students need to contact the programme leader to discuss this further and explore the impact on their programme to develop a plan of action.

Military reserve personnel – students need to contact the programme leader to discuss this further and explore the impact on their programme to develop a plan of action.

### **Car parking**

Car parking whilst on placement is limited at most Trusts. It is therefore advisable for students to find out before starting their placement if there are any facilities for student car

parking. On-site parking at UWE is available at Glenside and Frenchay campuses by displaying the relevant parking permit.

### **Disability services**

Disability Services offer a wide range of support services for students including assisted technologies, assessment and support for learning specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and support with reasonable adjustments for placements via an access plan (see access plans above)

### **Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)**

All midwifery programmes require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to starting the programme and you will not be allowed into practice until you have DBS clearance. You must send your certificate to Admissions as per the joining instructions. All students with a police conviction or caution on their DBS certificate will be seen by the programme leader in order to decide whether they are eligible to remain on the programme. If you have a concern about your DBS certificate, please contact the programme leader.

### **Dyslexia**

The most common form of disability at the University is dyslexia. This along with related specific learning difficulties such as dyspraxia affects around 5% of the student population. Whilst many students with dyslexia will have been diagnosed at school or college, some do not realise that they have dyslexia until they reach university. They may have developed strategies for dealing with the difficulties which they face without understanding that these are related to dyslexia. This is particularly true for older students. If you think you may have dyslexia, contact Disability Services.

### **Elective placements**

Students are able apply (criteria available) to have an elective opportunity either abroad or in this country at the end of the second year for the third-year opportunity (please see previous Elective section)

### **Extended placement**

If you fail clinical practice module in any academic year, an extended placement will be considered at the award board. All students need to have successfully completed practice before the start of a subsequent year to meet NMC requirements (2019). If this is not possible, you will be required to step off the programme and return later, if appropriate.

Please note, an extended placement is not an automatic right, and the decision is made by the award board panel, not a member of the programme team. Extended placements are arranged through the Professional Practice Office (PPO) and are usually for a minimum of 1 week but may be longer with a maximum of 5 weeks available, depending on individual student's circumstances. Your Academic Assessor and your Practice Assessor will make an individualised plan in conjunction with the co-programme lead to support you with meeting the required programme and module requirements.

## **Flu vaccinations**

You may be eligible to have a flu vaccination whilst on placement. Staff involved in direct patient care including students should be advised to enquire about vaccination when in a placement where the seasonal flu / Covid vaccines are offered to staff.

## **Fitness to Practice**

The NMC state that all students must be fit to practice. In order to achieve this the following applies:

- Good Health / Good Character Annual Declaration - **completing an annual declaration** on the ARC system to confirm this. Good health and good character are fundamental to fitness to practise as a midwife.
- All midwifery students are expected to work towards being able to practice in accordance with The Code at the point of registration. An important determinant of good character is the individual's commitment to, and compliance with the Code (NMC 2018)

The rules relating to good health and good character require nurses and midwives to self-declare their fitness for entry to the register, on renewal of registration and readmission to the register. Additionally, a supporting declaration from a third party is required on application for first entry to a part of the NMC register. This is provided by the Lead Midwife for Education.

### What do we mean by good health and good character?

The following applies to both qualified and student midwives, student midwives are expected to always work under direct and indirect supervision.

Good health is necessary to undertake practice as a midwife. Good health means that you must be capable of safe and effective practice without supervision and are able to make good quality decisions about peoples' care. It does not mean the absence of any disability or health condition. Many disabled people and those with health conditions can practise with or without adjustments to support their practice. If you are a midwife in poor health, it means that you are affected by a physical or mental health condition that impairs your ability to practise without supervision.

Good character is important and is central to the NMC Code in that midwives must be honest and trustworthy. Your good character is based on your conduct, behaviour, and attitude. It also takes account of any convictions, cautions and pending charges that are likely to be incompatible with professional registration.

Your character must be sufficiently good for you to be capable of safe and effective practice without supervision.

### Implications

If you declare a health condition or disability you should be assessed, where appropriate, with support from the occupational health department, or a disability services team or adviser or other medical practitioner where appropriate. Any assessment relating to



disability should focus on what reasonable adjustments can be made to support you to achieve entry to or maintenance on our register

### Legislative Requirements

The Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (the order) required the NMC to establish and maintain a register and, in doing so, to prescribe the requirements to be met as to the evidence of good health and good character in order to satisfy the Registrar that an applicant is capable of safe and effective practice as a nurse or midwife. The requirements for registration are specific (please see NMC website for further information).

### Disclosure of Criminal or Pending Criminal Convictions

Nursing and midwifery are self-regulating professions. A significant aspect of self-regulation is knowing what is right or what is important. All nurses and midwives are required to abide by the NMC rules and standards which include the code. It is therefore essential for you as a student to disclose any criminal or pending criminal convictions you may have. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) does not apply and all convictions, including those which are spent, must be disclosed. Student Midwives must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously known as a Criminal Records Bureau check) and will be required to complete a disclosure application form. All information will be treated in confidence. If you receive a criminal conviction during the period of your midwifery training, it is a requirement of both the University and the NMC that it is declared. In the first instance, this should be reported in confidence to your Academic Personal Tutor.

### How to complete the declaration

Students must self-declare that they are of good health and good character prior to starting Years 2 & 3 by logging into ARC and completing the declaration. In Year 1, students must have Disclosure Barring Service clearance prior to starting placement. Students who do not complete the Good Health/Good Character declaration within the allotted time frame will have the following sanctions applied:

- Prevented from attending practice until this is completed
- Seen under the [Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure](#)

Students who do complete the Good Health/Good Character declaration but are subsequently found to have either misrepresented their situation or not informed the Programme Leader of any changes will be dealt with under the Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure.

### **Hepatitis B vaccination**

Occupational health clearance is required prior to commencing clinical placements; part of the screening and immunisation programme includes the Hep B vaccination – this consists of 3 vaccinations and a blood test to confirm immunity. Please ensure you attend scheduled occupational health assessments to meet the requirements to attend clinical practice.

Failure to attend might result in charges for missed appointments to Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure instigation for no compliance.

### **Information points**

The Information Point is located in the Library at Glenside campus and can support students with many issues including applying for reasonable adjustments, advice about fees, university regulations and providing replacement student ID cards.

### **Interview days**

Students are entitled to 1 day in Year 3 to attend and prepare for interviews which can be counted as practice hours. You should have this recorded on your timesheet (if during placement) and signed for by your practice supervisor or APT once appropriate evidence (such as a letter or email inviting you to interview) has been seen.

### **Investigation in practice**

Sometimes it is important to learn lessons from adverse incidents in clinical practice, there is a culture of no blame, openness, and honesty in keeping with the Duty of Candour. In order to understand and learn lessons students who were present during incidents may be asked to provide information in addition to the documentation, a midwifery tutor must be informed and present.

An investigation can take numerous forms, some examples are listed below:

- Interview requests of students - Management Routes via AiP
- Interviews student support provided before, during and post interview (must involve a tutor / AiP)
- Student advised to contact Practice Education Team and Academic Personal Tutor for support
- Statement requested all routes - Academic personal tutor or AiP must be present
- Decision regarding investigative route. Reportable to Management
- Internal or reportable. Notification to AiP / APT
- Practice issues/whistle blowing
- Outcome feedback to student as appropriate

### **Latex allergy**

Healthcare workers who frequently use latex gloves are at risk for developing latex allergy. It can also cause irritant contact dermatitis. This causes dry, itchy, irritated areas on the skin, most often on the hands. It can be caused by the irritation of using gloves, or it can also be caused by exposure to other workplace products. Frequent hand washing, incomplete drying, exposure to hand sanitizers, and the talc-like powder coatings (zinc oxide, etc.) used with gloves can aggravate symptoms. If you have or suspect that you have a latex allergy, you should be contact your APT or programme leaders for an Occupational

Health referral and/or an access planning meeting. It may also be advisable for you to seek advice from our GP.

### **Making up practice hours**

Students are required to complete a minimum of 2300 practice hours to register as a midwife over the three years. To achieve NMC requirements for minimum hours, students are required to make up any hours lost through sickness or absence (authorised or unauthorised) at a later date. Remember all days lost through sickness or absence from practice **MUST** be made up by the end of the programme and **BEFORE** the student profile can be presented to the end of programme Award Board / NMC.

You can make up some hours during your continued allocated placement. Additionally, missed hours can be allocated as an extra placement at the end of each year during the extended placement period, the co-programme lead will allocate appropriate placements based on your individual needs and Trust capacity. The agreed process is as follows: After the second placement block time sheet administration PPO and Co-programme lead will meet to review ARC hours / weeks outstanding, if any student has more than 37.5 hours outstanding at this point, an additional placement will be requested. This placement may fall at any point during the 5-week allocated extended placement period dependent on availability and capacity in placement areas. Once confirmed and agreed by the placement area, a placement will appear on ARC. If there is no capacity at all the hours will carry forward to the next year.

If additional hours are missed in the final placement block, a makeup time placement cannot be guaranteed due to the short notice to make necessary arrangements and these hours will carry forward into the next year.

Please do not email individual tutors or PPO / CO-programme lead as this causes further confusion. The process is managed entirely by hours recorded on the ARC system – timely submission of your time sheets supports this process.

### **Maternity / Maternity Support Leave**

See [UWE Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave.](#)

### **Meal breaks**

You are entitled to a 20-minute break for every 6 hours worked.

### **Medicines management guidance**

See The Main Programme Blackboard site or The Midwife as a Skilled Practitioner Blackboard site.

### **Needlestick injuries**

If you sustain a needlestick injury, you must follow the Trust's local Needlestick Injury policy which will include attending Occupational Health as soon as possible. You should also ensure that the incident is reported to the University by using the [UWE online accident report form](#). You may wish to contact the Practice Support Line to get support from your AiP.

### **NMC progression points**

The NMC (2019) has set minimum requirements that must be met by the student. A recommendation for progression at the point at which they will progress from one part of the course to the next. For pre-qualifying midwifery education, which states that a nominated practice assessor working in partnership with an academic assessor will recommend the student for progression for each year of the programme. This applies to all theory and practice modules weighted appropriately to the programme.

### **Numeracy**

All students are required to undertake a timetabled online in-class numeracy test in each academic year.

### **Occupational Health service**

The University has a contract with the Avon Partnership NHS Occupational Health Service for assessment, advice and guidance in relation to fitness for practice placements and other health related matters.

When commencing your programme of study Occupational Health sessions will be timetabled to assess your immunisation records and initiate any required immunisation programmes.

Any contamination with bodily fluids or needlestick injuries must be reported immediately via the Trust reporting systems and UWE incident report form [UWE online accident report form](#).

You may be asked to contact the service directly for telephone advice before a referral is made for you. All students should declare all health conditions before you start on the programme, an assessment will be undertaken to plan how you will achieve the requirements of the programme and clinical practice. If you do not declare a known health condition which compromises your ability to be in placement, this may be considered under the UWE Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure.

Please note that all back injuries must be assessed by OH prior to returning to placement. If you sustain a back injury, please inform the co-programme leader as soon as possible so that they can refer to you to Occupational Health and plan to support you.

### **Paid employment outside of the midwifery programme**

All pre-registration midwifery courses are regarded as full-time courses. You have a professional responsibility to ensure that you are fit to attend your practice learning

opportunity and/or University and to ensure the safety of those under your care as well as for your own health and well-being. You should adhere to the Working Time Directive. Paid shifts must not be substituted for placement learning.

### **Partner leave/Maternity Support Leave (formally paternity leave) See**

[UWE Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave.](#)

### **Placements allocations**

Placements are allocated through the Professional Practice Office (PPO) and each placement must meet the NMC requirements of the programme. If you have a personal reason to not be allocated to a particular placement area or speciality (for example, family member is a service user in that area), then please discuss with the co-programme lead. Students must be prepared to travel to placement allocation within the university's geographical locations. Because of the complexity of placements and the need to ensure transparency, tracking and equity, students are not allowed to contact and / or organise their own placements.

### **Placement Charter**

The practice education of nursing and midwifery students is a partnership between students, university staff and placement areas. This charter outlines the expectations and responsibilities of all those involved.

The charters underlying principles will be that all individuals will be treated with courtesy and respect and to be treated as a valued member of the wider multi-disciplinary team. Any issues regarding an individual's safety are raised and escalated as per UWE policy. The UWE Bristol Nursing and Midwifery Policies can be found on Practice Support Net and can be found [here](#)

### **Practice Absence Report Line**

If you are absent from placement, you must report it to the Practice Absence Report Line and your placement. On contacting your placement, please make sure you:

- Speak to your practice assessor or clinical supervisor or other registered midwife.
- Take the name of the person you are speaking to.
- Inform them of the reason for the absence.
- Inform them when you intend to return.

You should email [practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk) or call 0117 32 83283 and leave a message with your name, contact number, current placement details and reason for your absence. Calls are not routinely returned from this number. If you wish to speak to someone, you should call the Practice Support Line on 0117 32 81152.

## **Practice hours**

Placement lengths have been carefully worked out to give you the best possible opportunity to pass the required learning outcomes. Students must complete all the hours stated for the placement over the time period specified. It is not acceptable to 'bank' extra hours worked to shorten the length of the placement. To meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requirements for registration, every student is required to complete a minimum of 2,300 hours of clinical practice over the course of the programme. Without certification of these hours, you will be delayed in qualifying and will not be able to register as a midwife. If you cannot meet this requirement before the scheduled end of the course, you will have to make up hours to the required total. This includes any time missed through sickness / absence, special leave, jury service, compassionate leave, or authorised absence.

All clinical placement hours count as practice hours, inclusive of Trust or organisation inductions and training. You will therefore need to sign a register when you attend these days and have the timesheet signed for these sessions. Failure to get timesheets signed will result in these hours being counted as absence and you will be required to 'make up' any deficit in hours. Hours missed from nonattendance at Work base clinical seminars, will be made up in practice settings.

Practice hours are recorded in ARC using the information provided from timesheets.

## **Practice Support Line**

The Practice Support Line is a confidential helpline for nursing and midwifery clinical supervisors, practice assessors and students. Students are encouraged to use this line to report concerns whilst on placement and seek support from AiPs if required. Contact details are: [hscpsl@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:hscpsl@uwe.ac.uk) and 0117 32 81152.

## **Practice Support Net (PSNet)**

The [Practice Support Net](#) provides advice, guidance and tools to support practice supervisors and practice assessors in their role. It gives guidance by programme and information about assessment in practice which you may also find useful.

## **Pregnant Students**

A pregnancy risk assessment will need to be undertaken in all placement areas, please discuss with your AiP and practice area lead to ensure this is completed, See [UWE Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave](#).

## **Professional communication**

During your training, you will engage in a range of communication across the midwifery spectrum, as well as other health and social care practitioners, services users, family members, carers and academic staff. This will include written and verbal communication conducted variously across a range of methods. You are expected to conduct yourself appropriately and professionally at all times; ensuring and respecting confidentiality, equality, diversity and good ethical practice as outlined in the NMC Code (2018)

Advancements and the increased use of IT with digital technology increases the risk of confidential patient/service user information being made available to many people and care should be taken to ensure the use of these should not compromise service user safety, confidentiality and treatment. Particular emphasis is placed on the appropriate use of emails for correspondence purposes. Service users and their families/carers should never be discussed via social networking sites. Any breach of confidentiality will result in referral to the Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure.

### **Professional Practice Office**

The Professional Practice Office manages all student placements allocations, the Practice Support Line, Practice Absence Line and ARC. For key contacts, see this [link](#).

### **Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure**

The University provides several programmes of study where students' professional suitability to register for and undertake the programmes will be relevant and will require assessment and monitoring by the University. These programmes of study are ones which lead to professional registration and/or a license to practise in a professional context and are characterised as being practice-centred and directed towards the achievement of professional competence and/ or professional registration. In addition, all these programmes are accredited and/or regulated by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies which are involved in the design, delivery and regulation of programmes.

Programmes within the Department of Nursing and Midwifery are monitored and validated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). In particular, the NMC is concerned with seeking to ensure that students comply with professional codes of conduct and demonstrate developing standards of professionalism. All nursing and midwifery students are bound by the NMC Code (2018)

Considering the above, the University needs to be satisfied that students registering for and undertaking such programmes are professionally suitable to do so in the context of the professional area concerned, and with reference to the standards of the particular profession and the requirements of the NMC. Students registering for and undertaking such programmes are bound by the UWE Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy and are required at all times to demonstrate acceptable standards of conduct, demonstrate relevant values and attitudes, satisfy relevant criminal record requirements, and satisfy relevant health requirements for the programme concerned, as set out in the programme handbook.

[The Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure](#) sets out how the

University may respond to instances where a concern is raised regarding a student's professional suitability and the type of action that the University may take to deal with the concern, and to support the student. In appropriately serious cases, the University has the right to suspend and/or terminate a student's registration on the programme.

Examples of where professional suitability concerns may arise, please access the current policy.

The University recognises that concerns regarding students' professional suitability may arise in a variety of ways (e.g., as a result of a student's practice, academic performance or his/her/their conduct, or issues raised by University staff, other students, health professionals or placement providers).

The University may consider concerns regarding students' professional suitability, however they arise and will act to deal with concerns promptly and fairly with a view to managing matters effectively and supporting students and other persons concerned (e.g. other students, staff or clients in a professional setting).

The University recognises that dealing with matters in this way is critical not only to ensuring that relevant professional standards are attained and maintained but also to supporting student learning and academic achievement and to the furtherance of a positive student experience.

This Policy and Procedure applies to students throughout their period of registration with the University, both on and off campus, and always. It is not limited to term time.

In implementing this Policy and Procedure, the University will remain mindful of its duty of care and of its obligations to students under the Equality Act 2010 including in appropriate cases to make reasonable adjustments. It will also remain mindful of the confidential and sensitive nature of professional suitability matters and of its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Raising and escalating concerns**

The NMC has published guidance on [Raising Concerns: Guidance for nurses and midwives](#) (2019) setting out broad principles that will help practitioners think through the issues and take appropriate action in the public interest. This includes information on recent legislation that offers protection to whistle blowers as well as updated information on organisations nurses and midwives can go to for further advice. UWE also has a policy on raising and escalating concerns where students are directed to contact the Practice Support Line in the first instance.

If you have a concern that someone who is registered as a nurse or midwife is not fit to practise because of a health or character issue, you have a duty outlined in the code to make your concerns known. In the first instance, you should discuss this with your APT or AiP.

**Flow chart for Practice issues and Whistle blowing is available in the MORA.**



## **Reasonable Adjustments**

It is your responsibility to inform UWE of any health-related issues which may impact on your clinical practice. Support and reasonable adjustments will be made via an access planning meeting. The Equality Act (2010) requires the University and placements to make reasonable adjustments for students in clinical placements, under the [Disability and Equality Issues guidance](#). If you feel that you may benefit from having an access plan, please contact your APT in the first instance.

## **Requirements to meet the Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes.**

In midwifery students are required to fulfil the requirements of the Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes, clinical numbers.

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2023-pre-reg-standards/new-vi/standards-for-pre-registration-midwifery-programmes.pdf>

## **Self-directed study days during practice placements**

Self-directed study time cannot be negotiated for dissertation supervision or other coursework preparation which should be conducted on days off. Midwifery students are reminded that the NMC practice hours are related to clinical practice in your placement area, so other study days must be in your own time.

## **Service User/Carer Feedback forms**

Where appropriate, pre-registration student midwives are expected to obtain feedback from women and families regarding their care delivery using the Service user form. This feedback will inform the assessment process. It is at the practice supervisor's discretion as to which woman may be considered appropriate to request feedback from.

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/practicesupportnet/guidancebyprogramme/midwifery/practicementation.aspx>

## **Shift patterns**

The working week is 37.5 hours, and you should not be on placement for more than 150 hours in any 4-week period. Working Time Directives mean that you should not work more than 48 hours in one week. Ideally, students should not work more than 42 hours whilst at UWE to ensure that you are fully rested and able to maximise your learning whilst on placement. This also applies if you are making up time in the placement. The maximum hours to be worked over a 4-week period are 192 hours. For more information, see EU Working Time Directive.

Students are expected to work the shift pattern adhered to by the placement and follow their named clinical supervisors as closely as possible. However, in some placement areas, it may not be possible to work the same shift pattern as registered staff. Shifts are rostered by the placement lead or their delegated midwife for the clinical placement area. As is the expectation for registered staff and to meet the NMC requirements, students are expected to manage their child caring responsibilities around their shift patterns. You may make

requests for certain shift patterns with a minimum of two weeks' notice. Your placement lead is not obliged to grant your request. You should be mindful of the needs of other students on placement with you and ensure that requests for weekends or nights are fair.

Students should work the full range of shift patterns.

It is an NMC requirement that students undertake 24-hour, 7-day care and so students are expected to undertake night duty and weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Students should not work more than 1 weekend in 2 or more than 3 consecutive night shifts and are not expected to work a night shift which ends on the morning of a scheduled University day or starts in the evening of a University day.

### **Sickness and absence reporting**

Reporting absence fulfils the conduct of a professional practitioner, and it is an expectation that all students will comply with this. It is essential the University maintains a record of any absences as it is a requirement of the NMC that all Nursing and Midwifery students have completed 2300 hours in clinical practice. Failure to complete the required hours by the end of the three years will result in sickness/absence time being completed to make up hours and delay NMC registration and allocation of personal identification numbers (PINs).

If you are sick, you must report it to the placement at least 1 hour before the shift starts and to the Practice Absence Reporting Line (0117 328 3283).

You must comply with local Occupational Health policies, for example, on return to placement following diarrhoea and vomiting. If you are experiencing an episode of sickness and vomiting, Trust policy excludes you from returning to placement until 48 hours after your last bout of vomiting. This reduces cross infection to patients and colleagues.

#### Sickness of less than 6 days

If you are sick for up to 6 consecutive days, you must submit a self-certification form to the Professional Practice Office (PPO). These are available from the Information Point. If you have less than 6 days sickness or absence during a placement, then you can choose to make up some or all the hours missed within the placement, if agreed by the placement. You may negotiate with the placement to make up hours equivalent to the shift that you have missed. These hours should be recorded on your timesheets in the makeup hours box and signed by your practice supervisor. These makeup hours will then be added to your ARC record by the PPO team. Please note that you must not exceed the Working Time Directive of working more than 48 hours.

#### Sickness of 6 days or more

If you are sick for 7 consecutive days or more, a medical certificate is required from your GP. This should be submitted directly to the Professional Practice Office to accurately record practice hours. If you are absent or sick for more than 6 days during a placement, then you must discuss how and when you make up hours with the Co-Programme Leader. It is not always possible to make up time in the same practice learning opportunity. Students, who

have long periods of sickness, or frequent short-term sickness/absence, will be required to attend Occupational Health for a health assessment, which the Programme Leader will request. You may be required to intermit from the programme if the absence is lengthy as you are not likely to be able to meet the learning outcomes to pass placement.

### **Social networking**

We accept that many of our students use this as a means of communication and appropriate use promotes positive social and working relationships, the sharing of ideas, learning and good practice. However, this should not be used as a forum to express individual personal dissatisfaction relating to clinical practice, patients, service users or academic staff/elements of the programme. Any individual deemed by the University to be using a social networking site in an inappropriate or offensive manner will be suspended pending a Professional Suitability Panel (PSP) hearing. A possible outcome resulting from this inappropriate behaviour includes dismissal from the programme (see Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure and the NMC guidance).

### **Stress**

Many students experience stress due to trying to balance the demands of practice and academic work whilst still having a life. Try to identify your current sources of stress and effective ways of managing them. Try to become familiar with the signs and symptoms of stress to help you to recognise if you are becoming 'stressed' and take appropriate action. Possible signs of stress include difficulty sleeping, tearfulness or aggression, loss of appetite or over-eating, difficulty concentrating and anxiety. If you feel that you are becoming 'stressed' consider:

- Talking to your practice assessor/practice supervisor
- Looking at the UWE Wellbeing Service pages
- Seeking advice from an AiP
- Contacting your Academic Personal Tutor for advice
- Making a self-referral to [UWE Wellbeing Service](#)
- Speaking to your GP
- Booking a restorative clinical supervision session with a Professional Midwifery Advocate (PMA)

### **Student Advisors**

Student advisors can support you with a wide range of university matters and can be contacted through the Information Points. Student advisors can support students through professional suitability cases and can be contacted by emailing [advice@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:advice@uwe.ac.uk)

### **Student Hardship Fund**

NHS funded students are prioritised for the Student Hardship Fund which can offer a nonrepayable grant of up to £1000. You can contact the Money Advice Line which is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday between 9.30 -11.30 and Wednesdays 14.00-16.00 on 0117 328 5432 or by email [mafs@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:mafs@uwe.ac.uk)

## **Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave**

Pregnant students are entitled to up to maternity leave. Once a student reaches 20-24 weeks pregnant, they will be given a MAT B1 form by their midwife which confirms the pregnancy and ensures that they are eligible to receive an NHS maternity bursary. Students should be advised to contact the programme lead once they have their MAT B1 form even if they do not wish to take any maternity leave so that they can plan for progression, discuss maternity leave and entitlements.

All students should have an access plan which your APT can arrange for you. You should inform your placement that you are pregnant so that a local risk assessment can be undertaken. You can obtain a replacement uniform free of charge to accommodate your pregnancy.

Students whose partners are expecting a baby are entitled to up to 4 weeks maternity support leave which cannot commence until the baby is born. These 4 weeks can be taken at any point within the first year of the baby's life and can be taken separately. Students are also permitted reasonable time off study in order to enable him/her/them to attend antenatal appointments prescribed by a doctor, midwife or health visitor with his/her/their partner.

Students who are adopting a child are entitled to Adoption Support Leave.

In all cases, you should contact your programme lead who will sign post you appropriately.

## **Students with a disability**

If you have a disability which may affect your placement, discuss your concerns with the programme leader in order that they can offer the appropriate support and arrange an access planning meeting. The University Disability Service has a range of support services for students.

## **Time keeping**

Good time keeping links with professional conduct, demonstrating motivation, reliability, and commitment. Midwifery involves a variety of working patterns including shift work, night duty and weekends. To be and feel part of a placement team, it is essential to experience the setting fully and this includes being on time to attend shift handover, team meetings, clinical supervision and team debriefs. It also ensures you are up to date with the day to day running of the placement, any changes which may have occurred since you were last on shift and any safeguarding issues. If for any reason you are going to be late, it is courteous and professional to let someone know; in placement this should be your practice assessor or a representative. When you arrive, ensure a member of the team knows you have arrived for health and safety reasons and sign in where appropriate.

## **Timesheets**

Your timesheets must be completed accurately to reflect your time in practice. You should get your timesheets signed at least weekly by a registered midwife who is a permanent

member of staff. Bank staff and non-registered staff cannot sign your timesheets. Follow the guidance provided by PPO to ensure you submit your timesheets promptly. Failure to do so will result in you being recorded as absent. The practice team checks and verifies your documentation and timesheets and then your practice hours are recorded on ARC. If you have a query about your practice hours once recorded on ARC please contact PPO.

You will need to attach a copy of your timesheets and declaration to any travel claims (see below) you may make; therefore, it is also a good idea to keep a copy of the timesheets for your own personal record. This can be a scanned copy or photo from a smartphone, for example.

Failure to submit time sheets will be classed as a non-submission against the relevant practice module. Falsification of timesheets will be considered a breach of your NMC Code (NMC 2018) and will be referred to Professional Suitability proceedings within the University and may result in a discontinuation of your studies. You may also be referred for investigation under NHS Counter Fraud procedures.

### **Travel claims**

All placement expenses claims should be submitted via the Information Point at Glenside. You should submit a copy of your timesheets at the same time to assist with checking dates.

### **Uniforms and Dress Code**

UWE has a strict uniform and dress code policy. All these requirements are to prevent cross infection and protect the public and yourself from injury.

- Your uniform should be clean.
- Student ID badge must be clearly visible.
- Black shoes, preferably lace up (No crocs or pumps)
- Long hair must be tied back and off the face and shoulders.
- Nails must be short and free from varnish.
- No false nails or eyelashes
- Keep make up minimal.
- Jewellery – ear studs, or one plain ring only
- Ear spacers and plugs, necklaces and hoop type earrings must not be worn.
- Piercings kept to a minimum and discreet.

When travelling to and from placement, it is preferable to travel in your own clothing, changing into uniform on arrival. It is a good idea to purchase a dark (e.g. blue/black) coloured full-length coat or raincoat which will completely cover your uniform whilst travelling. This is particularly useful when undertaking community-based placements. It is inadvisable to be seen in public in uniform as members of the public may mistake you for registered staff and seek assistance inappropriate to your status. Wearing your uniform in

places such as shops, restaurants and bars whilst off-duty, is not only an infection control risk, it may also undermine the idea that you are safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the public. Please avoid wearing your uniform in public

Prior to commencing each placement, it is essential that students check the expected dress code as, in some placements, it is acceptable to wear 'mufti'. Where 'mufti' clothing is permitted, this should be appropriate:

- Tee shirts bearing slogans are not appropriate.
- No ripped jeans
- No short skirts, short tops
- Footwear should be sensible and appropriate.
- Some placements do allow training shoes. Do not assume this is the case – check first.
- Where there are religious or cultural issues that affect adherence to the uniform policy; please seek advice from the Co-Programme Leader prior to commencing placement.
- Pregnant students can obtain a replacement uniform free of charge to accommodate their pregnancy.
- All students should wear their uniform when attending mandatory training and skills days sessions at UWE.
- Students can purchase replacement uniforms from reception at Glenside campus or online via the Students' Union

### **Vaccinations**

All students should be up to date with their routine immunisations, e.g. tetanus, diphtheria, polio and MMR. On starting a nursing or midwifery programme, all students are asked to provide details and documented evidence, where available, to show their status in respect of a number of infectious diseases and immunisations (tuberculosis, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, varicella, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV antibodies). You may need to ask your current/previous Occupational Health Department, General Practitioner or Practice Nurse for information. You are not allowed to start practice placements until UWE Occupational Health have confirmation of your immunisation status. If you are not up to date, then you will be required to have all vaccinations before you can start placement. Failure to have the required immunisation status could be construed as unprofessional behaviour, and may result in investigation under the Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy

### **Wellbeing Service**

The Wellbeing Service offers a comprehensive array of support services to help enrolled students with their mental health and personal development needs including counselling, and supervision Fully intermitted students may not be supported by the Wellbeing Service and should be directed to their GP for support. Students need to self-refer by completing the [online registration form](#) or phone 01173286268.

## **Working Time Directive**

[Working Time Directives](#) mean that no-one should work more than 48 hours in one week. Ideally, students should not work more than 42 hours whilst at UWE to ensure that you are fully rested and able to maximise your learning whilst on placement.

Under the same legislation, students are entitled to 2 days off a week, but these may not be consecutive. You must also have an 11-hour rest period within a 24-hour period, e.g. you cannot do a night shift followed by a late shift if both fall within the same 24-hour period.

## References

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