



## Employment of undergraduate students of nursing and midwifery

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

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

A registered undergraduate student of nursing/midwifery is defined for the purpose of this position statement as an individual enrolled within a recognised nursing and/or midwifery program leading to registration as a nurse and/or midwife, who is registered with the NMBA as a student nurse and/or midwife.

### **It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:**

1. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery should be subject to agreement between the relevant ANMF State or Territory Branch<sup>1</sup> and the employer, and include the number of students to be employed per ward, the area of employment, the hours of work, rate of pay, and the full-time equivalent value in the workplace.
2. The provision of employment for undergraduate nursing/midwifery students should be provided as a complement to their formal education programs to provide students with an income and increased exposure to clinical environments. This employment should be independent of their undergraduate education clinical placement; and not be a requirement of the student, the employer or the education provider.
3. Where a model of nursing or midwifery is in place that includes undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery working in paid employment, the undergraduate role must be clearly identified. The role of undergraduates employed as assistants in nursing/midwifery must occur with written authorisation of the Director of Nursing and must comply with the relevant State or Territory policies and the COAG *National code of conduct for health care workers*.<sup>2</sup> This role should be articulated in the position description as agreed to by the relevant ANMF State or Territory Branch.
4. Undergraduate nursing/midwifery students may be employed as assistants in nursing/midwifery or registered undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery with or without a formal qualification. A minimum qualification may be required in particular settings such as within the acute care environment where relevant State and Territory policies and employer requirements need to be met
5. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery must be covered by an award or enterprise agreement of the relevant ANMF State or Territory Branch.
6. Remuneration of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery must be negotiated with the relevant ANMF State or Territory Branch and specified in the award or enterprise agreement.



7. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery must not be a substitute for the employment of registered nurses, enrolled nurses or midwives. Undergraduate nursing/midwifery students should not replace registered health practitioners to cover sick leave or gaps in the rostering at any time.
8. Any employment of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery must occur within relevant state or territory legislative requirements.
9. There must be adequate registered nurse/midwife support and supervision for the employed student nurse/midwife in the workplace, including training/mentoring programs for nurses and midwives acting as student mentors, and up to date policies and procedures relevant to the area in which the students are working.
10. There must be education and training of registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses regarding the employment of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery.
11. Consistent with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's national decision-making framework,<sup>3</sup> the registered nurse/midwife is responsible and accountable for all nursing or midwifery activities they delegate to the undergraduate student of nursing/midwifery.
12. Any facility employing undergraduate nursing/midwifery students must ensure that staffing and skill mix takes into account case mix, dependency levels of the clinical area and how this aligns with care activities and scope of practice of the undergraduate nursing/midwifery student.
13. Undergraduates employed as assistants in nursing/midwifery or registered undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery assist in the provision of basic nursing/midwifery care, working within a plan of care under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse or midwife. The undergraduate assistant in nursing/midwifery or registered undergraduate student of nursing/midwifery still remains accountable for their practice. Undergraduates must work within the scope/limits of their level of knowledge and skill and within their job description provided by their employer.
14. In consultation with the relevant ANMF State or Territory Branch, the employment of undergraduate students of nursing/midwifery must be subject to regular evaluation and review in conjunction with the student, other nurses or midwives and the employer.
15. Where employers engage a methodology for appropriate nursing or midwifery staffing and skill mix in a unit or area of practice, undergraduate students in nursing/midwifery should not be included in those calculations.
16. The ongoing management of safe and ethical employment of undergraduate nursing and midwifery students should be reviewed annually by key stakeholders.



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*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2017*  
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#### References

1. This includes ANMF Branches in the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania, Queensland (Queensland Nurses' and Midwives Union), and New South Wales (NSW Nurses' and Midwives Association).
2. COAG Health Council (2015). *National code of conduct for health care workers*. Available at <https://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/NationalCodeOfConductForHealthCareWorkers#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20National,who%20provide%20a%20health%20service>
3. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2020), *Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/julianneb/Downloads/Nursing-and-Midwifery-Board---Framework---Decision-making-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery---Advance-copy%20\(3\).PDF](file:///C:/Users/julianneb/Downloads/Nursing-and-Midwifery-Board---Framework---Decision-making-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery---Advance-copy%20(3).PDF)