

Practice hours & attendance monitoring

BNurs, MNurs and MSc Adult Nursing

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Practice hours

50% of NMC approved programmes are practice learning and students need to achieve 2,300 hours in practice during the programme. Completion of these hours needs to be monitored to ensure student safety & well-being, engagement with the programme & achievement of regulatory body requirements.

The nursing programmes are planned on the basis of a 37.5 hour practice week, although student hours vary due to local shift patterns. Students can work up to an average of 48 hours per week – with placement agreement.

Completed hours are monitored by PARE timesheets which inform on-going programme data requirements, but do not give real-time updates on attendance. University staff can access timesheets at any time to check them, but there is no guarantee they will be completed by students or signed off by practice staff each day. Academic Advisors can only accurately monitor completion of hours post-placement in order to monitor progress against the 2,300 hour target.

Post-Covid, a consistent number of students have struggled to keep on track with practice hours for various reasons, often personal or unique.

A deficit of practice hours is defined as the number of hours a student is below the predicted number they could have completed at any stage of the programme.

For example, by the end of BNurs placement 2 a student could have completed 262.5 hours in practice (37.5 hours x 7 weeks). If they have completed 230 hours they are in deficit and will have to make those hours up later. If they have completed 280 hours they are ahead of the predicted hours.

BNurs students with practice hours deficits (May 2024);

	37.5-75 hours	75 – 150 hours	150+ hours
2021	42	44	48
2022	34	25	23
2023	45	37	54

Three quarters of the 2023 cohort did not achieve all the Essential Skills for Health hours, with deficits, before their first practice placement, of between 1 and over 200 hours.

Addressing a practice hours deficit is challenging and stressful for students whilst trying to manage academic and practice commitments. Additionally, there are limited opportunities in the academic year to make up hours. The NMC requires 2,300 hours of both theory & practice and so students cannot complete extra practice hours in theory weeks.

Reporting absence

Students must attend all scheduled placements. If a student is unable to attend practice it is important that they

- Inform their practice supervisor / learning environment manager / Practice Education Facilitator on the first day of absence
- Notify their Academic Advisor of the absence
- Record the absence on PARE

PEFs / practice staff are asked to inform **Academic Advisors** of any unexpected student absence. AAs should follow up with the student to ensure their well-being and safety. They should also consider if and when it is appropriate to refer students to a Concern Review Panel or other support services.

Monitoring & managing practice deficits

Academic Advisors must monitor the completion of practice hours on an on-going basis. The SHS placement team will produce reports periodically, but Academic Assessors & Advisors can also check PARE timesheets at any time to calculate progress toward the 2,300 target. Practice hours completion should be discussed routinely with students and support offered as needed.

Theory attendance monitoring uses triggers for intervention based on percentages, but making up 150 hours in practice is as significant for a 3rd year as a 1st - a 1st year may have more time to make up the hours, but the problems rarely improve if not actively addressed.

Monitoring triggers

Trigger 1	37.5-75 hours deficit	AA & student discuss, plan & document
Trigger 2	75-150 hours deficit	AA & student discuss, plan, document & consider making up hours over summer break
Trigger 3	150+ hours deficit	AA & student discuss, plan, document, recommend making up hours over summer / consider interruption & refer to CRP

Making up hours

Students can try to make up hours during a placement or in annual leave after a placement. Only students in deficit can use annual leave to make up hours.

To ensure student safety & well-being and for governance purposes, students can only make up hours during annual leave in their latest placement area. It is at the placement / PEF's discretion whether they can accommodate the student's request. Once a student has agreement from the PEF / placement they should inform their AA who will submit the relevant form via the practice learning gateway.

In the event that a student wishes / has to make up hours over the summer the first step is a discussion between them and their AA. The AA then needs to liaise with the SHS placements team to discuss placement availability, potential dates and the number of hours to be achieved. The placement team will develop plans for the student to return to their most recent placement area or for a new bespoke placement depending on circumstance.

At the scheduled end of the programme, the Academic Lead for Practice Development and the SHS placement team will work with individual AAs and their students to plan extended or bespoke placements to make up hours as required.

Frontloading hours

Students cannot frontload practice hours, i.e. complete more hours than planned per placement, in the expectation that they can reduce subsequent placements. Even if a student has completed 2,300 hours before their final placement, they must attend the full duration.

Placement dates & hours are agreed far in advance and from a university perspective they do not then change. It is up to placement providers to agree any extension or alteration of attendance for individual students. Students and providers should be willing to negotiate, but ultimately the practice staff will decide if a student has met all practice assessment requirements. Placement start and end dates cannot be changed.

Academic Advisors must monitor the completion of practice hours on an on-going basis and discuss any potential frontloading with students when noted.