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Introduction

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005, general practice is at the centre of primary health care in Australia and is the most frequent point of entry into the health system, with approximately 85% of the population reported to visit the general practitioner in any one year.

General practice nurses are important members of the multidisciplinary team that provide primary care in the community. The role of the general practice nurse is diverse and in 2008, approximately 8,000 nurses were employed in general practices in Australia. The benefits that practice nurses provide in general practice include improved outcomes in chronic disease, improved integration with the acute care sector, improved public access and an increase in the range of services available at the practice.

The main purpose of this booklet is to assist in providing a quality experience for student nurses during their clinical placement in general practice.

Benefits of Clinical Placements in General Practice

A clinical placement is where a nursing student applies their knowledge to practice, learns key skills and achieves required competencies as part of lifelong learning. Following are some of the benefits of clinical placement in general practice.

For the student:

- increase the students understanding of the role of the practice nurse
- provide an experience in the primary health care setting
- provide experience in health assessments, health prevention and patient education
- provide knowledge and experience for a possible career path

For the practice nurse preceptor:

- opportunity to promote practice nursing as a career option
- opportunity for professional development in preceptorship
- demonstrated commitment to the nursing profession
- enhanced role as a nurse preceptor

For the general practice:

- opportunity to promote practice nursing as a career option
- opportunity to raise the profile of the practice within the community
- demonstrated commitment to valuing nursing in general practice
- demonstrated commitment to assisting with recruitment strategies for practice nursing
- established links with local universities
- opportunity to promote the role of practice nurse within the community
- opportunity to assist in facilitating quality clinical placements for nursing students

For the university:

- broaden the choice for students for community care placements
- improved knowledge and understanding of the role of general practice
- opportunity to work in collaboration with general practices

Student Responsibilities

Before the placement:

- ensure you understand the specific expectations of the placement experience
- visit or telephone the practice prior to the commencement of the placement
- establish contact with the nurse preceptor at the practice
- discuss the required dress code with the practice - most practices will require you to wear a uniform
- review unit requirements for the clinical practice placement
- be aware of your current scope of practice appropriate to your current level of education
- identify your learning needs and how you will go about meeting these needs during the placement
- In consultation with the preceptor determine learning goals for your clinical experience and discuss the proposed plan of activities

During the placement:

- be punctual and inform your preceptor before your expected time of commencement if you are going to be late or if you are sick and will be unable to attend - this is an important aspect of professionalism
- in case of illness or misadventure you must immediately notify your preceptor - a medical certificate is required for an absence due to illness
- be proactive and seek opportunities to achieve the required competencies throughout the placement experience
- demonstrate a willingness to work as part of a team
- learn to express your needs and adopt a questioning approach to your learning
- use your preceptor for guidance and support to ensure that you get the best from the learning experience
- be reflective and give and receive constructive feedback
- submit the competency documentation for verification and signoff by your preceptor as competencies are achieved
- maintain contact with your unit of study coordinator and advise them of any concerns or problems you may have
- turn off your mobile phone and place it in a secure place - access will only be permitted during meal breaks
- remember information gained about the patient from any source e.g. the history via discussion with other staff or the patients themselves must be kept in the strictest confidence

Following the placement:

- complete placement evaluation
- complete assessments and submit to the university by the due date if applicable
- remember to thank your preceptor and the practice staff for providing your clinical placement opportunity

University of Sydney

Graduate Attributes

These are the characteristics that the university undertakes that all of its students will develop by the time they leave the University of Sydney. You should be aware of these attributes, and where they occur in your units of study.

SCHOLARSHIP: An attitude or stance towards knowledge:
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Graduates of the University will have a scholarly attitude to knowledge and understanding. As Scholars, the University's graduates will be leaders in the production of new knowledge and understanding through inquiry, critique and synthesis. They will be able to apply their knowledge to solve consequential problems and communicate their knowledge confidently and effectively.
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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: An attitude or stance towards the world:

Graduates of the University will be Global Citizens, who will aspire to contribute to society in a full and meaningful way through their roles as members of local, national and global communities.
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LIFELONG LEARNING: An attitude or stance towards themselves:

Graduates of the University will be Lifelong Learners committed to and capable of continuous learning and reflection for the purpose of furthering their understanding of the world and their place in it.
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Research and Inquiry. Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences will be able to create new knowledge and understanding through the process of research and inquiry.
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Information Literacy. Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences will be able to use information effectively in a range of contexts.
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Personal and Intellectual Autonomy. Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences will be able to work independently and sustainably, in a way that is informed by openness, curiosity and a desire to meet new challenges.
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Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding. Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences will hold personal values and beliefs consistent with their role as responsible members of local, national, international and professional communities.
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Communication. Graduates of the Faculty of Health Sciences will recognise and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning.

All students must comply with and follow faculty and university policies and procedures.

University policies	http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/
Academic honesty	http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/
Plagiarism	http://sydney.edu.au/learning/education_policy/academic_dis_honesty_in_coursework_policy_2012.pdf
University's student centre	http://sydney.edu.au/current_students/student_administration/
The code of conduct	http://sydney.edu.au/ab/policies/Student_code_conduct.pdf

Relevant NSW Health Clearances

All students are required to:

- Have their NSW Health Criminal Record Check Clearance Card or National Criminal Record Check with them and available for staff at the placement site to view at any time during placement.
- Complete an additional Prohibited Persons Declaration at the placement site if requested by the site, even though all students are expected to have completed a Declaration and filed it with the University previously.
- Have their completed NSW Health Vaccination Card with them. The Card is to confirm the student has completed all relevant vaccinations to comply with the NSW Health policy. The Card will be available for staff at the placement site to view at any time during placement. http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/pdf/PD2007_006.pdf

NSW Health Code of Conduct: All students must have read and comply at all times with the NSW Health Code of Conduct and signed a declaration to abide by this during clinical placement. http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/PD2005_626.html

NSW Health Records & Information Privacy (HRIP) Act 2002: All students must have read and comply at all times with the NSW Health Records & Information Privacy (HRIP) Act 2002 during the clinical placement.

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll_pnsw.nsf/pages/PNSW_03_hripact

Student responsibility for adherence to the NSW Health, University and professional code of conduct at clinical placements: All students must have read and comply at all times with the NSW Health, University of Sydney and professional codes of conduct/ethics on or related to clinical placements.

http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Student_code_conduct.pdf

http://www.fhs.usyd.edu.au/forms/student_placement.pdf

Insurance

The university has current public liability, personal indemnity and personal accident insurance coverage for all current students. A copy of policy details is available if required. Please contact the Sydney Nursing School Clinical Education Office.

Student Evaluation and Feedback for the Unit

Your assistance in evaluating the placement is sought through completing the student evaluation form found in your Off-Campus Clinical Record Log Book. Every year the unit of study is modified in response to student feedback, so please think carefully when you complete the survey.

eLearning

Clinical Education eLearning site

You can go to the University of Sydney eLearning log on page <https://elearning.sydney.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> and use your Unikey to log on. Select specific clinical education site link. If you do not have this option, please contact the Clinical Education Office.

Communication Guidelines

All queries pertaining to your clinical placement should be directed to the Clinical Education Office. Should you wish to discuss educational issues, including any concerns whilst on your placement, please contact your Unit of Study Coordinator.

The preferred methods of communication with the Clinical Education Office or your Unit of Study Coordinator are as follows:

- University email – for general enquiries, and non-urgent matters. Please include your FULL NAME and student identification number when sending emails to staff. Use only your university email NOT personal email addresses.
- Face to face – staff have appointment boards outside their office where you can make appointments or leave a message. This is the most appropriate way to have enquiries answered that are about educational content or are of a sensitive nature.
- Telephone – this form of communication is most appropriate for enquiries that can be answered briefly. Students are required to call back if unable to speak with a staff member, or leave a message if the matter is of an urgent nature.

Contacts at Sydney Nursing School, University of Sydney

Clinical Education Office:

Telephone: + 61 2 9351 0518

Email: nursing.clinicalplacement@sydney.edu.au

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Australian General Practice Network