

18 February 2021

Dear Colleague,

When we last wrote to you, we had just re-introduced a set of emergency standards that enabled final year nursing students to move into extended clinical practice again as part of their studies to support the workforce. This was alongside further flexibility around the arrangements for student supervision and assessment. As ever, we are incredibly grateful for the work that you, your colleagues and students have all done, at pace, over that period, and hope you are keeping safe and well in these unprecedented times.

EU Directive review

We have also been keeping you up to date in relation to our ongoing work to review the requirements that were previously outlined within the EU Directive. We have commissioned two independent research organisations to report on quantitative and qualitative evidence that can inform any future changes we may want to make to our pre-registration programme standards. This work will take several months to complete and any permanent changes to our standards will not be in place until the latter part of this year.

Recovery standards – use of simulation in nursing programmes

Although these evidence reviews are being conducted at pace, we are incredibly mindful of the impact of the pandemic on students' programmes now, with many having to take time out due to needing to self-isolate, or being in high risk groups. We also know that placement capacity and the breadth of experiences are reduced. Working closely with the Chief Nursing Officers and Council of Deans of Health our Council has agreed two additional recovery standards which enable up to 300 hours of simulated practice learning to count towards practice hours. Attached to this letter is a full copy of the current emergency and recovery standards, including the new RN5 and RN5.1 along with some supporting information about how these two standards should be used.

These standards should provide additional flexibility to AEs to further support students in being able to meet their learning requirements and progress onto joining our register. It is very important that AEs discuss and agree with students the rationale for whether or not, and how the standards will be applied.

The new recovery standards do not apply to midwifery programmes at this time, as there is a consensus UK wide view that student midwives education and training should continue in line with existing midwifery standards and current arrangements.

These changes should not be seen as pre-empting the research currently being undertaken which will allow for a longer term review of our standards and requirements. As recovery standards, they will be regularly reviewed and withdrawn once they are no longer justified by circumstances which are ongoing as a result of the pandemic.

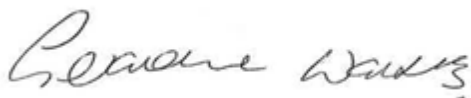
Quality Assurance

Where AEs have adopted the emergency standards that were introduced in January 2021, or these new recovery standards, we will ask for a report on how they have been implemented using a new dedicated Covid-19 exceptional reporting form. We will be sending this out to AEs shortly.

Please note that the Annual Self-Reporting template should only be used for reporting how you have adopted the Recovery Standards which were published prior to January this year.

If you have any questions on the new recovery standards then please contact Sue West, Senior Nursing Education Adviser at Sue.West@nmc-uk.org. If you have any additional questions, or as usual, if you would like to discuss anything with us then please contact Dr Alexander Rhys, Assistant Director (Professional Practice) at Alexander.Rhys@nmc-uk.org, or myself.

Yours sincerely



Professor Geraldine Walters CBE PhD RN
Director of Professional Practice