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Final Year Allied Health Professions Students

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Open letter to final year allied health professional students within the last 6 months of study in Scotland from Carolyn McDonald, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer

We have all heard from the First Minister that we are in a time of crisis, and we all need to work together to ensure the best possible outcome for the people of Scotland. The First Minister described it as “the biggest peacetime mission that our nation has undertaken in our lifetimes”.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport has instructed NHS Scotland and individual health boards “to do all that is necessary to be ready to face a substantial and sustained increase in the number of cases of Covid-19”, and the Scottish Government is “working with regulators to enable returners to the healthcare profession and by looking to deploy students into settings that are appropriate to their skills”.

I know that as a final year student (within the last 6 months of studies) you are highly skilled and you will be able to make a significant contribution. So for those of you who are able (and we recognise that some of you may not be, for a variety of reasons), I am asking you to agree to become part of your local health and social care workforce.

Following legislation being brought forward in the UK Parliament, the Health and Care Professions Council will establish a temporary emergency register allowing final year students who have successfully completed their final clinical placements to practice as registered professionals.

Your university with NES Education Scotland will work to place you where you can continue to develop your skills, complete your academic programme and at the same time provide service to the people of Scotland, or within other parts of the UK, if you have returned home.

You will be paid for the work and will have the same terms and conditions as any employee. At the same time, you will continue to be a student of your university, and they will provide you with academic support to enable you to graduate on time, as much as is possible.



I recognise that you may be anxious or unsure, and there are many of you who are in the category of people who need to be shielded, rather than exposed. So this isn't for everyone, and we will be working to minimise any disruption for those who cannot participate. However, if you aren't able to practice in acute or patient facing areas, there are many other sectors where there will be a need for staff who have a whole variety of skills. We need people to deliver care in the community, in NHS24, in primary care and in the care home sector. Whatever your skills, if you feel able to be deployed, there will be an opportunity for you if you want to take it up.

Course and programme structures are different in each Higher Education Institution. It is therefore the responsibility of each university to detail the options which are available to you should you wish to become part of the health and social care workforce during this period of unprecedented need. Your university will be in touch with you regarding their plans, so please keep an eye out for communication from them.

Carolyn A McDonald

Carolyn McDonald
Chief Allied Health Professions Officer