



Employing nursing and midwifery undergraduates position statement

1. Purpose

This position statement sets out the principles the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) considers should underpin the employment of undergraduate nursing and midwifery students to ensure it is ethical and safe for the students, their colleagues and the community.

2. Definitions

A **registered undergraduate student of nursing or midwifery** is a person enrolled in a recognised nursing or midwifery program who is also registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) as a student nurse or midwife.

3. Context

Many undergraduate nursing and midwifery students seek employment in healthcare settings to support themselves while they study and to enhance their learning. To ensure such employment benefits the student, their colleagues and the community, it is imperative that guidelines and appropriate industrial and professional agreements are in place.

4. Position

Industrial arrangements

It is the position of the ANMF that:

1. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery:
 - must be complementary to their formal education programs and not a requirement
 - must be independent of their undergraduate clinical placement
 - must not be a substitute for the employment of registered or enrolled nurses or midwives
 - must not be used to cover the planned or unplanned absences of registered nurses, enrolled nurses or midwives or to fill any other gaps in the rostering
 - must be subject to regular evaluation and review with the student, other nurses or midwives, the employer and the relevant ANMF branch.
2. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery must meet all relevant state and territory laws, regulations and codes.
3. It must also be subject to an award or enterprise agreement between the relevant ANMF branch and the employer. Such agreements must include as a minimum:
 - the number of students to be employed per ward
 - the area of employment
 - the hours of work and rate of pay
 - the full-time equivalent value in the workplace.



Professional arrangements

It is the position of the ANMF that:

4. Undergraduate nursing or midwifery students may be employed as:
 - assistants in nursing or midwifery
 - registered undergraduate students of nursing or midwifery with or without a formal qualification.¹
5. Students employed in this way must always:
 - work within the job description provided by their employer
 - work within the scope and limits of their level of knowledge and skill
 - work within the care plan established by a registered nurse or midwife.
 - work under the supervision and delegation of a registered nurse or midwife.
6. Where a model of nursing or midwifery care includes undergraduate students in paid employment, the undergraduate role must be clearly defined and:
 - authorised in writing by the Director of Nursing and agreed by the relevant ANMF branch
 - supernumerary and not included in the calculations for staffing and skills mix
 - reviewed annually by key stakeholders.
7. Employers must ensure the clinical area where the student will be employed is appropriate for student employment, considering:
 - the area's case mix and dependency levels
 - the care activities needed
 - the student's scope of practice.
8. Employers must also ensure the clinical area has:
 - adequate registered nurse or midwife support and supervision for the student
 - up-to-date and accessible policies and procedures.
9. Consistent with the NMBA Decision-making framework, a registered nurse or midwife must be responsible and accountable for all nursing or midwifery activities delegated to the student.²
10. Employers must provide additional training and mentoring programs for nurse and midwife student mentors.

5. Position statement management

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¹ Known as RUSONs or RUSOMs. Employers may require a minimum qualification where this is necessary to meet relevant state and territory policies and employer requirements.

² Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2020. *Decision-making framework for nursing and midwifery*. Available at: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-statements/frameworks.aspx>.