Protocol on reporting absent from clinical placement for BSc Midwifery Students and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital Limerick and HSE South (Waterford, Tipperary, and Kilkenny)

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<th>Document drafted by</th>
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1.0 Protocol Statement
This protocol describes the steps to be taken by BSc Midwifery Students and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students when reporting absent from clinical placements.

The contribution and dedication of Midwifery Students to attending for clinical placements is crucial to facilitate the development of clinical skills, competency progression and to develop an understanding regarding the midwifery profession. The delivery of a quality health service to mothers and babies is dependant on good attendance by Midwifery Students. Higher Diploma Midwifery students and BSc Midwifery Intern Students are part of the midwifery service staffing.

Completion of clinical placement is an integral and mandatory part of the Pre-Registration BSc Midwifery Programme and the Higher Diploma Midwifery Programme (An Bord Altranais, 2005, An Bord Altranais 2007). Student attendance while on clinical placement is recorded to ensure the completion of clinical placement modules and the attainment of An Bord Altranais requirements in relation to clinical placement (An Bord Altranais, 2005, An Bord Altranais 2007).

2.0 Purpose
The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that midwifery students, midwifery staff and clinical midwifery managers are familiar with the steps to be taken when a midwifery student is reporting absent from clinical placement.

3.0 Scope
The protocol for managing attendance and reporting absence applies to all midwifery students on clinical placements and when repaying clinical practice hours in all placement sites. It also applies to higher diploma midwifery students when attending university lectures as they are paid employees and time in University of Limerick is included in their contract of employment.

4.0 Definitions
4.1 Absence
An absence or interruption is defined as any leave, other than annual leave and public holidays, including sick leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, compassionate leave, 'force majeure' leave and special leave. (An Bord Altranais, 2005)

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities
5.1 The Allocations Liaison Officer Midwifery and the Clinical Placement Co-ordinators Midwifery will distribute this protocol to staff and midwifery students in all core midwifery sites.

5.2 All midwifery students must familiarise themselves with and adhere to the protocol.

5.3 MPDU staff must meet with midwifery students following each period of absence and complete relevant documentation.

5.4 The Allocations Liaison Officer Midwifery will evaluate and review the protocol.

5.5 Midwife Managers in all sites must be familiar with the protocol.

Protocol for reporting absent from clinical placements for BSc and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students
Developed by MPDU August 2009. Revised July 2012 Next review July 2014
6.0 Protocol for Reporting Absence

6.1 Reporting absent from placement for BSc Midwifery and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students

- The midwifery student is **personally** responsible for reporting all periods of absence from a clinical practice placement **as soon as possible** before the start time. Where possible, the midwifery student should indicate the expected duration of his/her absence. The midwifery student should speak to the relevant manager in the site. A message should not be left with a colleague or at the main hospital reception.

- The midwifery student must phone the appropriate midwifery/nursing management contact person. The specific contact details for each hospital are included in **Appendix 1** of this document.

- Where a midwifery student is absent and has not reported absence as required, she/he may be telephoned to enquire about her/his wellbeing.

- If the period of absence is unknown, the midwifery student should keep in contact with Midwifery management and the Midwifery Practice Development Unit to update them on the situation.

- Attendance at University of Limerick for study days and Protected Reflective Leave is part of the rostered week. If a **Higher Diploma Midwifery Student or BSc Midwifery Intern is absent from any university study days** she/he must inform Midwifery Management the Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital according to the instructions in **Appendix 1**

6.2 Medical Certificate for Periods of Absence BSc Midwifery Interns and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students

- Two consecutive sick days may be taken without a medical certificate. Medical certificates must be submitted to the appropriate office on the 3rd day of absence from rostered duty effective from the date of the first day of absence (Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital, 2008, HSE, 2009).

6.3 Reporting back to the clinical practice placement following absence

- As soon as the midwifery student knows when she/he will be returning to the clinical practice placement she/he must inform the appropriate midwifery/nursing management as above by phone **on the day prior to return**.

- When the midwifery student is on placement in the Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital, she/he must also report in person to the Midwifery Management Office on the first shift after the absence.

6.4 Return to clinical placement meeting and documentation

- On return to the clinical placement, an informal meeting between the Clinical Skills Facilitator/Clinical Placement Coordinator Midwifery or the Allocations Liaison Officer Midwifery and the midwifery student will take place. This is in accordance with the HSE Managing Attendance Policy. A record of this meeting will be kept in the midwifery student’s file.
• In the case of non-compliance with the Reporting Absence Protocol or where patterns of absence are identified, the unrostered midwifery student may be referred to the Midwifery Practice Development Coordinator and the University of Limerick Course Leader.

6.5 Procedure in cases of frequent short-term illnesses/long term absence
• Where patterns of absence are identified, the Higher Diploma or BSc Intern midwifery student may be referred to the Occupational Health Department in accordance with the HSE Managing Attendance Policy. Following due process if no underlying reason is identified for the absences formal procedures such as the disciplinary procedure may be invoked. (HSE, 2009)

6.6 Repaying time for periods of absence
• Absences from clinical practice must be repaid to ensure that the midwifery student meets the clinical requirements of the programme. The timing of which will be at the discretion of the health service provider. Absences from clinical placement may affect the midwifery student’s achievement of clinical competency and his/her progression on the Pre-Registration BSc midwifery programme and the Post Registration Higher Diploma in midwifery programme.

7.0 Implementation plan
This protocol will be re-distributed to all midwifery students via relevant handbooks and by email. It will also be available on the University of Limerick’s students shared portal and on Q-Pulse.

8.0 Evaluation and Audit
• This protocol will be reviewed and evaluated by the Midwifery Practice Development Unit.

• BSc Midwifery students adherence to this protocol on managing attendance and reporting absent will be monitored and audited 3 monthly by the Allocations Liaison Officer Midwifery and the Clinical Placement Co-ordinators Midwifery (see Appendix 2)

• Higher Diploma Midwifery Students adherence to this protocol will be monitored by the Clinical Skills Facilitator for the Higher Diploma Programme (see Appendix 2)
9.0 References


Health Service Executive (2007) Disciplinary Procedure for Employees of the Health Service Executive, Nass, HSE


Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital (2008) Reporting Absence/illness Memorandum
Appendix 1: Reporting Absence Protocol

Higher Diploma Midwifery Students & BSc Midwifery Student Interns

- Contact Midwifery Management in the Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital
- Recorded in the Midwifery Management student sick record

Supernumerary 1st 2nd 3rd 4th year BSc Midwifery Students all placements in the Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital (MWRMH)

- Contact Midwifery Management in the Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital
- Recorded in the Midwifery Management student sick record

Supernumerary 2nd 3rd 4th year BSc Midwifery Students on specialist placements (Not in the Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital)

- Text CPC Midwifery Mobile
- Recorded in the Midwifery Management student sick record

All BSc Midwifery Students on Placement in South East sites (Waterford Regional Hospital St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny, South Tipperary General Hospital)

- Contact Midwifery/Nursing Management in the South East Placement site
- Recorded in Placement site
- Text CPC Midwifery Mobile
- Recorded in CPCM student sick record

Contact Details

- Waterford Regional Hospital 051-848000 ext2422 Bleep# 88 242
- South Tipperary General Hospital
  - Days 05277046/052 77158
  - Nights 052 77000 bleep 200
- St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny
  - 056 775385 Bleep 5385
- CPCM Mobile number 086 6078575

You must report absent by making telephone contact with Midwifery/Nursing Management as soon as possible before commencing your shift.

You must phone to report back on placement using the same mechanism as above as soon as you know you are fit to resume work/placement (before 5pm).
### Appendix 2: Adherence to reporting absent protocol audit tool

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Midwifery Student I.D. Number</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>Did the midwifery student report absent as per Appendix 1?</td>
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<td>If the midwifery student was on placement outside the Mid Western Regional Maternity Hospital Limerick, did the student send a text message to the Clinical Placement Coordinator Midwifery?</td>
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<td>Did the midwifery student phone to report back prior to resuming duty?</td>
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