

**Protocol on reporting absent from clinical placement for BSc  
Midwifery Students and Higher Diploma Midwifery Students in the  
University Maternity Hospital Limerick and HSE South (Waterford,  
Tipperary, and Kilkenny)**

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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 dependent 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 and BSc Midwifery Intern students when attending UL PRT days 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 Midwifery Practice Development Unit support team 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 A member of the Midwifery Practice Development Unit support team must meet with midwifery students following each period of absence.

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

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

## 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 absent as required, she/he will be telephoned to enquire about her/his wellbeing. If the Midwifery Practice Development support team are unable to contact the student they may contact the next of kin.
- 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 in the University Maternity Hospital Limerick 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 area (Midwifery Management UMHL or CPCM in UHW) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 before 5pm**.
- When the midwifery student is on placement in the University Maternity Hospital Limerick, 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, a return to work meeting between a member of the Midwifery Practice Development Unit support team 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 this Protocol or where **patterns of absence** are identified, the midwifery student may be referred to the Midwifery Practice Development Coordinator, the University of Limerick Course Leader and/or Clinical Allocations Officer.

#### **6.5 Procedure in cases of frequent short-term illnesses/long term absence**

- Where patterns of absence are identified, the Higher Diploma Midwifery student or BSc Midwifery Intern 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 distributed to **all** midwifery students. It will also be available on the University of Limerick's, Department of Nursing and Midwifery website and on Q-Pulse.

#### **8.0 Evaluation and Audit**

- This protocol will be reviewed and evaluated by the Midwifery Practice Development Unit support team.
- 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 and the Clinical Co-ordinator for Midwifery Programmes (see Appendix 2)

## **9.0 References**

An Bord Altranais (2005) Requirements and Standards for the Midwife Registration and Education Programme, Dublin. An Bord Altranais.

An Bord Altranais (2007) Requirements and Standards for the Post-RGN Midwife Registration Education Programme, Addendum to the Requirements and Standards for the Midwife Registration Education Programme, Third Edition (Dec 2005) Dublin. An Bord Altranais.

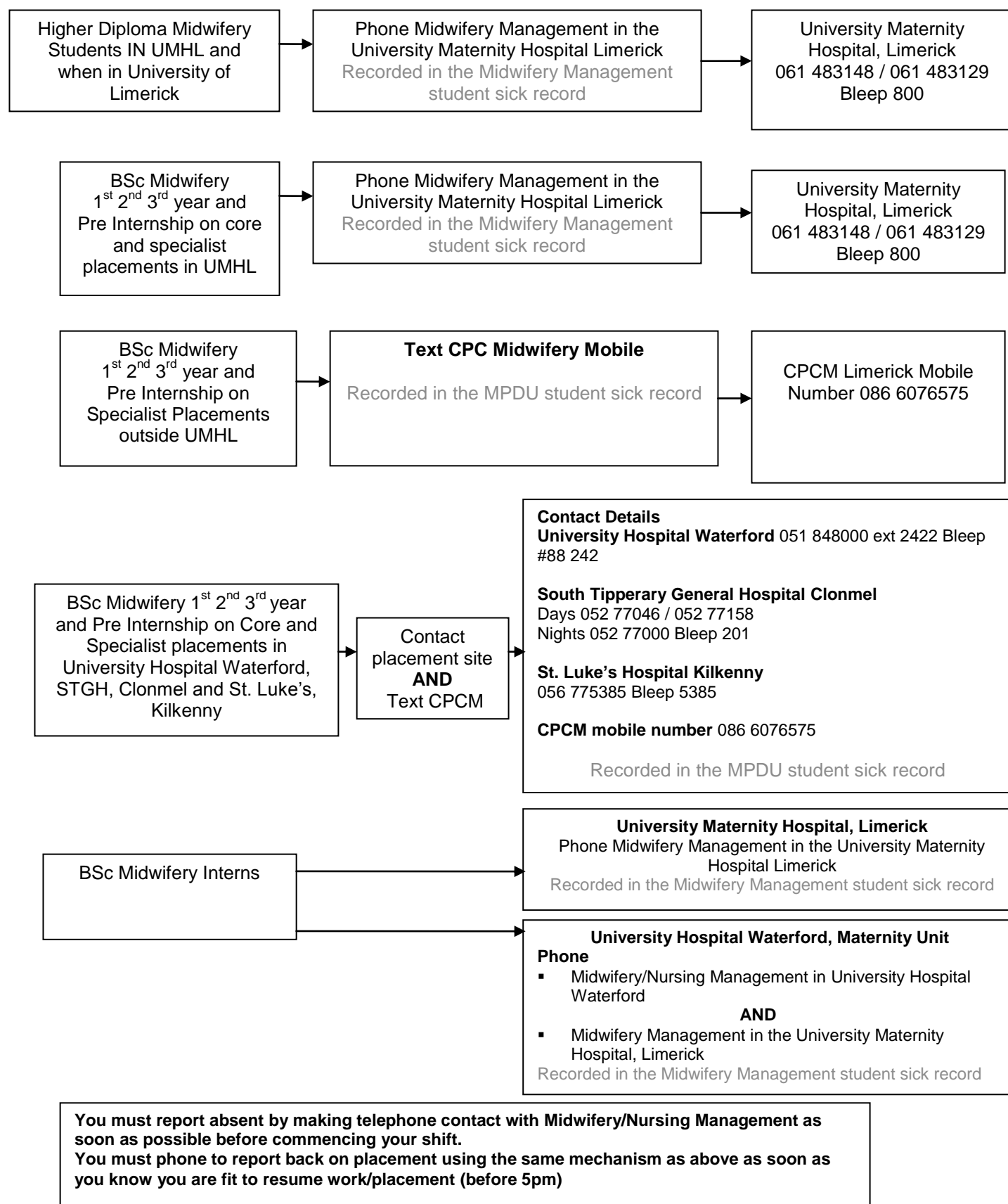
Health Service Executive (2007) Disciplinary Procedure for Employees of the Health Service Executive, Naas, HSE

Health Service Executive (2009) Managing attendance policy, HSE Circular 002/2009

Midwestern Regional Maternity Hospital (2008) Reporting Absence/illness Memorandum

## Appendix 1: Protocol for reporting absent from clinical placement

**MPDU 2016**



**Appendix 2: Adherence to protocol for reporting absent from clinical placement audit tool**

<b>Midwifery Student I.D. Number</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Did the midwifery student report absent as per Appendix 1?		
If the midwifery student was on placement outside the University Maternity Hospital Limerick, did the student send a text message to the Clinical Placement Co-ordinator Midwifery?		
Did the midwifery student phone to report back prior to resuming duty?		
When the midwifery student is on placement in the University Maternity Hospital Limerick, did the midwifery student report in person to the Midwifery Management Office?		