

1897 Bread and Roses: Decent Conditions for Health Science Students on Placement

Proposer - Juliet Donaghy (HSC YR1 UG)

Seconder – Ruth Stone (Edith Cavell Society) passed 21 April 2016

Union Notes:

1. Many Health Science (HSC) students do not adhere to a typical student calendar.
2. Students have little influence on placement allocation during their first two years of University study.
3. Students on placement are expected to produce summative academic work alongside their practical assessments.
4. Placements can isolate students and cause high levels of stress.
5. This Union recently sent a motion to the NUS conference acknowledging a systemic lack of support for nursing students contributing to high failure and drop out levels.
6. Legal protection for whistle-blowers was extended to Nursing and Midwifery students in 2015.

Union Believes

1. UEA SU has the ability to improve the lives of Health Science students.
2. Health and safety concerns at placement should be dealt with promptly and transparently by the trust.
3. HSC students that work in NHS services do not have adequate work protections.
4. There is a need to protect the supernumerary status of students on placement so they can learn without being expected to replace qualified staff.
5. Health Science students have the right to fair breaks, working conditions which are as safe as possible, private and family lives, freedom of expression, protection from bullying, and union representation and advice during placements.
6. All students should have access to accommodation which is not detrimental to academic work during placements.
7. All HSC students should feel able to raise concerns about unsafe practice without fear of detriment.
8. Opportunities such as participation in sports and societies should be accessible to all students regardless of course start times.
9. Union support should be available to any students experiencing difficulties on placement.

Union Resolves:

1. To mandate the Student Officer Committee to:

a. provide accessible information to all HSC students on the benefits and limitations of all relevant trade unions which can support HSC students, including Unison, Unite, the Community and District Nursing Association, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, GMB, The Royal College of Midwives, and the Royal College of Nursing.

b. provide information on whistle-blowing for HSC students, including the Duty of Candour expected of students, organisations providing support for whistle-blowers and the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians situated in all trusts working with UEA students; inform HSC students of their rights on placement and the correct procedure to raise concerns.

c. communicate with HSC staff on the needs of HSC students while maintaining the confidentiality of any HSC students who have raised concerns.

d. assess the specific needs of mature HSC students and address problematic areas that arise.

e. assess the specific needs of HSC students with caring responsibilities and identify how to best support these students.

f. ensure that the union's work to improve student mental health includes advice to students navigating Fitness to Practice regulations.

g. ensure the inclusion of all HSC students, including Midwives, within Welcome Week activities that are designed for non-standard calendar courses such as medicine, where appropriate.

- 2.** To lobby the Nursing and Midwifery Council to uphold freedom of expression and the right to personal life in future versions of the NMC code, removing restrictions on co-operating with the media and relaxing the guidance on professional behaviour. This includes allowing student nurses to express themselves freely online (barring hate speech, breaches of confidentiality and evidence of misconduct at work).
- 3.** To lobby the University to focus placement allocation on the needs of students, particularly in the interests of student carers, family cohesion and professional development.
- 4.** To lobby the University to front placement costs so that students are not prevented from accessing resources such as placement accommodation by the delay in official reimbursement.
- 5.** To advertise the financial support available to HSC students due to start placements.
- 6.** To collect data on the placement experiences of HSC students at least once every year, including: hours worked, supernumerary status, breaks taken, health and safety needs at work, incidences of bullying and harassment, the relationship of students with their mentors and link lecturers, that standard of accommodation available, and the impact of placements on wellbeing and family life, identifying the placement areas which show persistent problems

- 7.** To ensure all students raising concerns on placement have support from the SU advice centre and access to advocates during any meetings regarding the concern.
- 8.** To mandate the Activities and Opportunities Officer to create a plan to ensure that students with placement duties and atypical calendars are not excluded from clubs and societies.
- 9.** To lobby the Sportspark to provide more flexible pricing arrangements for students on courses with atypical timetables
- 10.** To encourage liberation caucuses, assemblies and peer support groups to consider the needs of HSC members whose participation may be limited by placement duties.