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joint position statement

employment of undergraduate students of nursing in a nursing setting

The Australian Nursing Federation, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses, and Royal College of Nursing Australia consider clinical education to be a fundamental element of undergraduate nursing courses. Employment of undergraduate students of nursing may enhance clinical education but it is separate to clinical education and should not be seen as a model for clinical education.

This position statement refers to undergraduate students of nursing but the same issues arise for student enrolled nurses who are not employed as trainee enrolled nurses during their course.

Some students will choose to be, or need to be, employed during the period of their undergraduate education, both for financial reasons and for the work experience such employment provides. Employment in a health or aged care setting may be more suitable for some students of nursing who would otherwise be working in an area unrelated to their current course of study, for example, retail or hospitality. This position statement refers only to the employment of nursing students in a setting where nursing care is provided and where the student is providing aspects of nursing care.

In relation to the employment of undergraduate students of nursing, it is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses, and Royal College of Nursing, Australia that:

1. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing must be on a voluntary basis, initiated by the undergraduate student of nursing; be complementary to their undergraduate education; and not be a requirement of either the employer or the educational institution.
2. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing must be covered by an award or agreement which will include: the area of employment, the hours of work, the role description, the salary-and the FTE value in the workplace;
3. Undergraduate students of nursing positions must not be substituted for registered or enrolled nurse positions;
4. The employment of undergraduate students of nursing must not contravene legislation including nursing acts or regulations, and poisons acts;
5. The undergraduate student in nursing while employed must be covered by the employer's vicarious liability;
6. There must be adequate registered nurse support and supervision for the undergraduate student of nursing in the workplace;

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7. The employment of students in nursing must be subject to regular evaluation and review which includes assessing the experience of the student; other nurses; the employer; and patient outcomes; and
8. The RCNA/ANF joint position statement on *Assistants in Nursing and other Unlicensed Workers (however titled)* (March 2004) should be used as a resource by those involved in the employment of undergraduate student of nursing, including the student themselves.