

Transitioning to Professional Practice

Preparing graduates for sustainable careers in nursing

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Introduction

Workforce retention is essential to tackle health inequities, ensuring all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, can access high-quality care.

The transition from student to graduate nurse can be challenging, leading to early career attrition rates (Brook, Aitken and Salmon, 2024). Almost 3000 professionals left the register in Scotland in 2023/24. Of these, 13.8% left within the first ten years, the highest since 2019 (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2024).



Aims

Career development initiatives can support students for their first professional role (Tucker, et al, 2019). The 'Transitioning to Professional Practice' module aims to aid the transition to professional practice and enhance the competence and confidence of the graduate nurse within the workplace, ultimately ensuring a sustainable and skilled nursing workforce.



Methods

The module uses online and face-to-face tutorials with the Career Development Consultant and Module Leader co-designing teaching and assessment materials. Learning outcomes focus on the attributes of a newly registered nurse, applying for their first nursing position, becoming a practice supervisor and developing their nursing career pathway.

There are over 590 nursing students; therefore, scalability is essential. The Career Development Consultant designs three of six module tutorials and writes lesson plans for lecturers who deliver employability tutorials within the context of their nursing fields. Over 50 video interviews were recorded with NHS professionals who described their career journeys. Students watch the interviews in preparation for a face-to-face tutorial where they explore career pathways.

Outcomes/Results

A nursing careers fair was timetabled within the module, with almost 100 professional healthcare staff attending from public and private sectors. Students submitted a supporting statement for a nursing job, which was worth 10% of the overall grade.

The pass mark is approximately 99%, and the module receives positive feedback from staff and students. The module team find the teaching resources flexible and straightforward to present in the tutorial classes.

"This module has been a beacon of light on the road to qualifying, giving me tools to reflect on my practice and think about my future." Year 3 BN Nursing student

"One of the most practical and helpful modules in our course." Year 3 BN Nursing student



Conclusion

Opportunities for professional development play a crucial role in improving nurse retention (Marufu et al., 2021). Providing student nurses with clear career pathways and continuous professional development enhances their skills, knowledge, and motivation as they transition into their graduate careers.

References

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