



# Joint statement on how we will support and enable the student allied health professional workforce to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak

Allied health professionals (AHPs) are an integral part of the health and care workforce and at the heart of responding to covid 19 now and in the weeks and months ahead.

We are in what is undoubtedly the most challenging, difficult and pressurised time in generations for teams working in health and social care settings right across the UK. We would all like to thank every one of you for your continuing dedication and commitment in dealing with this extraordinary situation to the best of your abilities. These unprecedented times call for clear action in ensuring as many people as possible can deliver the care that is needed in a way that is safe and effective for all concerned.

Responding to this demand has specific implications for student AHPs. We know that many of you, especially those nearing the end of your education, are keen to join the front line to provide essential support. Those in early stages of training are facing disruption as social distancing rules affect normal university life and health and care providers have less ability to offer clinical placements.

As leaders of the UK AHP community we have been working together with universities, professional bodies, NHS organisations and our regulators to ensure that as many people with the right skills and knowledge as possible can contribute to the covid 19 emergency and also enable students to complete their studies with minimal disruption.

We have balanced the needs of patients, front line health and care professionals and students, and agreed the following approach which enables students to offer their support to the front line with minimal disruption to their education.

1. All final year AHP students who have completed their clinical placements and been approved by their Higher Education Institution (HEI) as ready have been automatically registered on a new temporary

register by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). These new temporary registrants are invited to join the workforce as AHPs (indicative banding Agenda for Change (AfC) band 5). We will work with HEIs to formally sign off each student as per normal processes and enable them to graduate, at which point they will be able to apply for full HCPC registration. This sign off process may require additional theoretical learning and assessment.

2. Students who are in their final year and have not yet completed their clinical placements and students who are in their second year of their BSc (3rd year in Scotland) or first year of an MSc will be invited to opt in to a revised programme structure where they work in a paid support worker role which will be remunerated (indicative AfC band 3). These roles may be able to be used to support achievement of required practice hours; HEIs will determine if this is the case. This is intended to sustain learning and progression whilst recognising the reduced capacity to support clinical placements within the health and care system.
3. First year students and year two in Scotland will continue with their university programme; clinical placements will be paused. This means students will focus on the academic and theoretical part of their education and provision will be made to enable clinical hours to be achieved during year two and three (three and four in Scotland). These students may also wish to volunteer to support the front line in their spare time.

We know that for some students with underlying health conditions working on the front line during this emergency may not be feasible; HEIs will work with individuals to tailor support to individual circumstances.

In conclusion, we recognise that these are difficult and worrying times for everyone involved. We know that some of you are fearful for the future in this unprecedented situation however we want to reassure students and their families that you will not be disadvantaged as a result of the flexibilities required at this difficult time.

This is an uncertain time and we do not know when things will return to normal but please be reassured that as leaders of the AHP community we are committed to continuing our work together to support patients, students and health and care professionals.



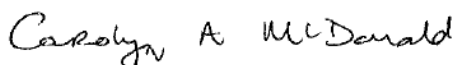
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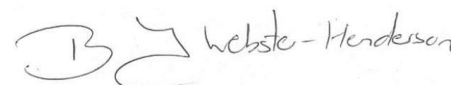
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