



This Protocol Pertains to The Following Events:

- a) **When an internship student is having significant difficulties in meeting standards during practice placement**
- b) **When a student is unsuccessful in their clinical assessment**
 - **BSc General Nursing**
 - **BSc Mental Health Nursing**
 - **BSc Children's and General Nursing**
 - **BSc Midwifery**

The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, and our Associated Healthcare Providers, are committed to supporting students as they progress through their internship practice placements to prepare them to become registered nurses or midwives.

This protocol will be enacted when a student has significant difficulties in meeting standards during a practice placement and outlines the events that should follow when a student fails to meet the required standards and competencies in the final assessment (NCAD/MCAT) on an internship placement. This protocol is implemented in the context of the programme derogation on progression which all students, preceptors, CPCs and UCD personal tutors should be familiar with¹.

The following actions should occur to assist the student in meeting the required standards in any (NCAD/MCAT) assessment while on any individual internship placement. They are sub- divided into sections reflecting the series of events commencing at the intermediate meeting and follow a series of steps up until the repeat and final opportunity for the student.

Note: If students finalise the completion of their NCAD/ MCAT documents before their practice placement period is completed and if subsequently, a serious performance or professional issue is identified during the remainder of the placement period, then the original successful NCAD/MCAT module outcome will be rescinded i.e. the pass grade will become a Fail Grade and a repeat placement with a new NCAD/MCAT will be required.

Step 1- Mid Interview 'Learning Plan' NCAD / Intermediate Interview 'Learning Plan' MCAT

- If the student is having significant difficulties in achieving domains/performance indicators in the NCAD or principles/ assessment criteria in the MCAT it is vital that these difficulties are identified as early as possible in order to allow time for improvement within that practice placement period.
- As soon as significant difficulties in meeting domains/performance indicators in the NCAD or principles/assessment criteria in the MCAT are identified they should be formally addressed with the student. The preceptor will prepare a plan to support the student to address the domains/performance indicators in the NCAD or principles/assessment criteria in the MCAT that require improvement during the remaining weeks of that placement. The student may contact their UCD Personal tutor for support as soon as there are difficulties in meeting domains/ performance indicators in the NCAD or principles/assessment criteria in the MCAT
- A mid interview learning plan (NCAD) / intermediate learning plan (MCAT) is developed with the student. In this plan detailed notes of the students' learning needs and the proposed actions to address these needs are made. This learning plan should be written in the NCAD/MCAT.

*All programme derogations are outlined at the end of this document. See 'Programme Requirements for Progression'.

1. This protocol can be relevant for anyone who is involved in supporting students in their clinical practice i.e. CNMs/CMMs, ALOs.

- The CPC will support this student throughout the placement and focus on their learning needs. They will also contact and inform the UCD personal tutor of the specific issues raised. The UCD personal tutor/UCD nominee may meet with the student at this or any time. At the same time, the student is advised to contact their personal tutor themselves also for additional support.
- It is advisable that the preceptor document any further meetings/observations with this student in the period between the mid / intermediate and final interview. This can be documented, giving dates and a brief description of the support offered and this too should be documented at the end of the Mid Interview Learning Plan / Intermediate Learning Plan.

Step 2- Final Interview.

- Subsequent to the final meeting, if the student has not met the required domains/ performance indicators in the NCAD or principles / assessment criteria in the MCAT for that placement, the preceptor will inform the CPC who will in turn inform the UCD personal tutor by e-mail.
- The CPC can be present for the final meeting if requested by the student or preceptor.
- A record of the ways in which the student has not met the domains/ performance indicators in the NCAD or principles/ assessment criteria in the MCAT will be documented in detail by the preceptor in the final interview outcome sheet in the NCAD/MCAT.
- Students can prepare for step 3. A copy of the 'Final Learning Plan' is included in the appendix of the NCAD/MCAT. Students should consider doing some preparatory work on their learning needs prior to the 'Final Learning Plan' meeting.

Step 3- Implementing a 'Final Learning Plan' after an 'unsuccessful' Clinical Placement².

- The student, CPC, UCD personal tutor (or UCD nominee) and preceptor³ will arrange to meet (if possible, by the end of the placement but normally within one week⁴ of the end of the practice placement).
- The purpose of this meeting is to discuss with the student their learning needs and draw up a 'Final Learning Plan' that will guide and support them in their subsequent clinical learning. (These documents are available from the UCD School office).
- This 'final Learning Plan' will identify the student's learning needs and guide them in areas that require further development during both their subsequent and repeat practice placements.
- The duration of the repeat practice placement will be of the same duration as the original practice placement with a new NCAD/MCAT. The assessment will be the same level as the original NCAD/MCAT (see related programme derogation at the end of this document).
- During the final learning plan meeting the UCD personal tutor should advise the student of the following important considerations which should be documented as actions in the final learning plan.
- In the case of the 'repeat' practice placement, it is mandatory that the student presents their 'final learning plan' to their new preceptor so that they can avail of the required support.

² The 'Final Learning Plan' replaces the original 'Action plan'. The wording was changed to reflect the emphasis on supporting the student's clinical learning in both subsequent and repeat clinical placements.

³ In some cases the preceptor may not be available to be present. In which case, another representative from the clinical placement can be present. The learning plan can be devised drawing on the documentation supplied by the preceptor in the final meeting.

⁴ There may be exceptions to one week in cases where a student is off duty/annual leave.

- The subsequent practice placement is not always the 'repeat practice placement'. However, in order for the student to maximise the benefits of their learning plan and improve their clinical learning outcomes in both the medium and long term, they are expected to discuss their learning needs (as outlined in the Learning Plan) with their next preceptor in their subsequent practice placement. The UCD personal tutor should emphasise that the domains of competence / assessment criteria are pertinent across all practice placements/assessments. It should also be emphasised that the opportunity to receive early support from a preceptor is in the best interest of the student.
- The Learning Plan will be agreed and duplicated so that the student, CPC & UCD personal tutor retain a copy.

Step 4 - NCAD/MCAT Presentation to the UCD Personal Tutor.

- The student presents this NCAD/MCAT to their UCD personal tutor at the designated date for presentation of the clinical assessment documentation. The student must also contact the UCD SNMHS Practice Placement Allocations Office (PPAO) to submit the details of subsequent clinical placement requirements. Contact the PPAO through the UCD SNMHS website, ucd.ie/nmhs/studentlife/howyouwilllearn/practiceplacement/
- The 'Fail grade' is recorded at the next available examination board.
- The student is offered a repeat practice placement, which will be the second and final opportunity to repeat the clinical module.
- The repeat clinical module will incur a repeat fee.

Step 5- Repeat (and final) Practice Placement.

- The student is offered a second and final opportunity to repeat the practice placement/ module. A new NCAD/MCAT is provided⁵ and normally a new clinical placement area⁶. This clinical placement will be of the same duration as the original practice placement. The assessment will be at the same level as the original NCAD/MCAT (see related programme derogation at the end of this document).
- As early as is convenient on the repeat practice placement the new preceptor will hold a preliminary/initial interview with the student. The CPC⁷ may be in attendance if necessary. During this meeting the student must present the 'Final Learning Plan' to their new preceptor, outlining their documented learning needs and the areas in which the student requires additional support.
- The mid interview (NCAD) / intermediate interview (MCAT) initiates the same protocol as step 1 if the student is having significant difficulties.
- Given that this is the final opportunity for this student in this practice placement/ module, the UCD personal tutor/UCD nominee in their supportive role shall meet the student at a convenient time soon after the intermediate meeting.
- The final interview follows the same protocol as outlined in step 2 if the student fails to attain their required standards.
- Presentation of this NCAD/MCAT to the UCD personal tutor is mandatory.
- In the event of the student being unsuccessful in this repeat attempt the student will be considered ineligible to continue in the nursing/midwifery programme. No subsequent attempt can be considered except with written agreement of Director of Nursing/Midwifery of the Allied Healthcare Providers and through application to the Taught Governing Board

⁵ Students can contact the UCD SNMHS school office to organise the collection of a new NCAD/MCAT

⁶ In the Midwifery and Children's and General programme, students usually return to the original clinical placement area for their repeat opportunity.

⁷ In an exceptional circumstance that a CPC cannot attend the preliminary meeting of a practice placement that is the internship student's final opportunity, the personal tutor/UCD nominee will be informed of this and will attend.