

## Open University Future Nurse Curriculum – Information for Employers

Since 2002, we've delivered a highly successful work-based pre-registration nursing programme in partnership with healthcare employers in Scotland. From Autumn 2020, we will introduce our exciting new Future Nurse curriculum to meet the new standards for nursing education published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC 2018).

Students will study one of the four fields of nursing in preparation for entry to the NMC register within one of these fields:

Adult Nursing

Children and Young People's Nursing

Learning Disability Nursing

Mental Health Nursing

Our new BSc (Hons) Nursing will support employers to develop their Healthcare Support Workers (HCSWs) towards registration with the NMC. Students will study flexibly alongside work, with a balance of theory and practice delivered through a combination of work-based, face-to-face and distance learning. Enquiry-based learning will be one of the approaches used to facilitate this learning.

The programme commences in October 2020 and takes 4 years to complete (215 weeks). More information on the programme can be found here <http://wels.open.ac.uk/overview/school-health-wellbeing-and-social-care/professional-programme-nursing/bsc-hons-nursing> .

### Future Nurse programme overview

The nursing degree programme is a balance of theory and practice studied part-time over approximately 4 years, offering the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and professional values of healthcare support workers.

The programme is multi-media facilitated and delivered via an online learning environment. Students will have a tutor for each of the modules they study, as well as a team of people at the OU to support them to succeed in their studies.

The programme is delivered in 3 Levels with each Level incorporating a theory and practice module (Diagram 1). You can access further detailed information on the programme and modules content [here](#).

**Diagram 1 – Overview of programme**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Introduction to health and social care</b> K102 (60 credits)	<b>Understanding nursing: knowledge and theory</b> K210 (60 credits)	<b>Assimilating nursing: knowledge and theory</b> K325 (60 credits)
<b>Introduction to healthcare practice</b> K104 (60 credits)	<b>Developing nursing practice</b> K211 (60 credits)	<b>Becoming an autonomous practitioner</b> (60 credits) K326 Adult K329 Children and Young People K328 Learning Disability K327 Mental Health

To progress through the qualification, students are required to integrate theoretical learning (learning for practice) and practice-based learning ([learning in practice](#)) in order to inform the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person and family-centred care.

As they progress, they are expected to learn and practise increasingly independently and will be encouraged to form ‘communities of learning’ with other students on the qualification. This will be promoted through online discussion forum activities, online tutorials using Adobe Connect, telephone and email contact. Practice supervisors (PS), practice assessors (PA) and practice tutors/academic assessors (PT/AA) will facilitate and support their practice learning in each setting where they gain experience.

### **Transitioning September 2019 students to the new Future Nurse Curriculum**

All students ‘transitioning’ into the new Future Nurse Curriculum who started their pre-registration nursing programme with the 19i (September) cohort will be short of 170 hours practice hours. This is because KYN117, which is the Stage 1 practice module they completed, only required them to complete 600 practice hours whereas KYN104, which replaces KYN117 in the new curriculum, requires them to complete 770 practice hours. Students have therefore been given documentation to record the additional 170 practice hours when working within their Healthcare Support Worker role and these hours must be verified by their manager and submitted at the end of their Level 2 studies.

As we have had the opportunity through developing K104 to reconsider what learning assets we make available to students, where there have been changes affected by policy or to reflect care across all fields of practice, specific learning resources have also been made available to transitioning students.

## Practice Learning

Half of the programme of study is based in practice learning. Students undertake a minimum of 2300 hours of supernumerary practice. Students require the opportunity to learn and provide care across a range of different learning environments to enable them to meet learning outcomes.

Each of the three levels of the programme are comprised of 770 hours of supernumerary practice, split into three practice learning periods (nine in total). At each level the students will usually undertake one practice placement in their normal place of work and the other two practice placements will be in external practice settings, in a range of care contexts and service user groups.

In level one of the Programme, students are expected to demonstrate guided participation in care, performing with increasing confidence and competence. In level two we expect them to become more competent in their abilities through active participation in care with minimal guidance and performing with increased confidence and competence. By the end of level three, they will be able to demonstrate their ability to achieve the NMC (2018) proficiencies in all four fields of practice to be eligible for registration with the NMC.

Diagram 2 provides an overview of the allocations of theory and practice hours for each level of the programme.

### Diagram 2

#### Distribution of theory and practice hours

Part of programme	Modules	Theory (hours)	Supernumerary practice (hours)
Stage 1	Introduction to healthcare practice (K104)	170	770
	Introducing health and social care (K102)	600	
Stage 2	Developing nursing practice (K211)	85	770
	Understanding nursing: knowledge and theory (K210)	685	
Stage 3	Becoming an autonomous practitioner (K236 / K237 / K238 / K239)	85	770
	Assimilating nursing: knowledge and theory (K325)	685	
<b>Total hours</b>		<b>2,310</b>	<b>2,310</b>

## **Enquiry Based Learning**

Content taught in level 1 focuses on the foundations of health and social care, whereas level 2 and 3 modules will develop generic and field-specific nursing content, allowing opportunities for students to explore the four fields of practice through use of an enquiry-based learning (EBL) approach. They will be introduced to the broad principles that underpin nursing practice in accordance with the Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards of proficiency for registered nurses (NMC 2018) and use case scenarios and vignettes to discover a range of caring interventions.

Whilst undertaking their theory modules in Levels 2 and 3 students will work in groups of no more than 8 students and will attend field specific online tutorials for 2.5 hours every two weeks to share and advance their learning and that of their peers. It is a mandatory requirement for students to attend and participate in these tutorials. This is a change to the model students will be familiar with where they were able to choose tutorials from a range of days/times. The dates and times for all of the EBL tutorials are agreed at the beginning of the module in order for the student to negotiate their attendance at the tutorials with their line manager. Please refer to Appendix 1 for further information on the delivery of EBL.

## Practice Learning Pathways (PLPs)

Students who are commencing the programme on 3rd October 2020 will follow the pathway outlined in Diagram 3 over a period of 16 months.

### Diagram 3

† The pathway applies to all R39/R43 K\*104 module code variants 2020J

August 2020 1

Learners are studying: **K\*102 2020J module 03/10/20 – 21/05/21 (600 hours theory)**  
**K\*104 2021C module 06/03/21 – 25/02/22 (170 hours theory and 770 hours practice)**

#### ⊕ Part One practice learning periods:

Practice placement	Start date - end date	Practice hours	Theory hours	Placement Meetings with Practice Tutor/Academic Assessor	Focus Relate to chosen Field of Practice
			520* Brought forward		
1	06/03/21 – 11/06/21	225	115 K102 80 K104 35	<b>Practice placement 1 Meeting 1 with Academic Assessor</b> [April 2021]	Learning Guides 1-6 Becoming a nursing student in practice; being professional; person and family centred care; communication skills, medicines management; quality and safety of care.  (Accommodates two weeks annual leave)
2	12/06/21 – 01/10/21	245	45 K104 45	<b>Practice placement 2 Meeting 2 with Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor</b> <b>Practice Assessment Interview</b> [September 2021]	Learning Guides 7-10 – order of study is flexible Infection prevention and control; assessment skills and care planning; bladder and bowel health; mobility.  (Accommodates <u>one week</u> annual leave)
3	02/10/21 – 11/02/22	300	90 K104 90	<b>Practice placement 3 Core practice-base Meeting 3 with Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor</b> <b>Practice Assessment Interview (resit**)</b> [January 2022]	Learning Guides 11-16 – order of study is flexible Nutrition and hydration; hygiene, skin integrity and wound care; acute and emergency care; promoting health; supporting skill; reflecting on your skills.  (Accommodates two weeks annual leave)
<b>Total</b>		<b>770</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>3 different experiences in total</b>	

\*520 hours of theory for K\*102 completed between 03/10/20 and 05/03/21 before the practice pathway starts.

\*\*Resit only required if pass not achieved at first attempt during Meeting 2. One week of annual leave to be taken w/c 18/09/21.

Students who commenced the programme in September 2019 will transition into the pathway commencing 3rd October 2020 outlined in Diagram 4 over a period of 16 months.

#### Diagram 4

Learners are studying: K\*210 2020J module 03/10/20 – 28/05/21 (685 hours theory)  
K\*211 2021C module 13/03/21 – 25/02/22 (85 hours theory and 770 hours practice)

#### Part Two practice learning periods:

Practice placement	Start date - end date	Practice hours	Theory hours	Placement Meetings with Practice Tutor/Academic Assessor	Focus Relate to chosen Field of Practice
			520* Brought forward		
1	13/03/21 – 02/07/21	185	485 K210 460 K211 25	Practice placement 1 Meeting 1 with Academic Assessor [April 2021]	Topic 1: Safeguarding across the life course Topic 2: Developing as a leader in nursing  (Accommodates two weeks annual leave)
2	03/07/21 – 29/10/21	285	245 K210 225 K211 20	Practice placement 2 Meeting 2 with Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor Practice Assessment Interview [October 2021]	Topic 3: Evidence-based practice in nursing Topic 4: Medicine optimisation and concordance  (Accommodates two weeks annual leave)
3	30/10/21 – 25/02/22	300	40 K211 40	Practice placement 3 Core practice-base Meeting 3 with Academic Assessor and Practice Assessor Practice Assessment Interview (resit**) [February 2022]	Topic 5: Patient safety and improvement  (Accommodates two weeks annual leave)
<b>Total</b>		<b>770</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>3 different experiences in total</b>	
**520 hours of theory for K*210 completed between 03/10/20 and 13/03/21 before the practice pathway starts **Resit only required if pass not achieved at first attempt during Meeting 2					

Students will be allocated placements in a range of practice learning environments relating to their field of practice. These placements are arranged in consultation with our partnering HEI's.

Prior to an OU student accessing supernumerary practice:

- The practice area must have a current and satisfactory education audit in place.
- The student must complete an individualised Covid-19 risk assessment and return the OU COVID Risk Assessment Confirmation form. **Students cannot commence any supernumerary practice placements until this has been returned to the OU.**
- There must also be a COVID-19 placement risk assessment in place.
- Support must be available to the learner in accordance with Part 2: Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC 2018).

Summative assessment of the placement may only be undertaken on completion of a minimum of 150 hours of practice. All proficiencies are to be assessed in the context of nursing practice not healthcare assistant/health care support worker practice.

## **Student assessment**

Assessment in level 1 involves developing student confidence in their performance, self-assessment and reflecting on their learning and practice. Assessment in Levels 2 and 3 develop students' ability to demonstrate independent learning, problem-solving and decision-making, critical analysis and synthesis of information. Ultimately students will be able to develop and present complex arguments at level three to enable them to deal with complex clinical situations. There is a strong emphasis on developing professional skills and proficiencies, particularly in the practice modules. Each module will comprise a series of assessment tasks, which are aligned with the learning outcomes and develop different skills. Students will be assessed both by the University and in clinical practice using a range of methods. These include:

- Essays
- Case studies
- Interactive computer marked assignments
- Reflective accounts
- Reports
- Practice assessments and proficiencies and procedures (Practice Assessment Documentation)

## **OU Practice assessment documentation**

All Scottish Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) have worked collaboratively to produce a single Practice Assessment Document (PAD) for Scotland.

The purpose of the PAD is to provide a record of the student's practice learning progress and achievement of learning outcomes throughout each practice learning experience (PLE).

The PAD is an integral part of the learning process. It is not simply a catalogue of learning activities; rather, will provide clear evidence of the learning that has occurred. The PAD provides an opportunity to demonstrate evidence of learning from academic activities and application to practice learning as well as from practice experience; it is essential to demonstrate achievement of the NMC Future Nurse: Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses (NMC, 2018a).

Students will have confirmed that they recognise the importance of the PAD to their ongoing learning supported by their practice supervisor and the importance of keeping this document safe. Assessment of their proficiency will be undertaken by their practice assessor and academic assessor for each level in preparation for future practice.

## **Practice Supervisors (PS), Practice Assessors (PA) and Practice Tutor/Academic Assessors (PT/AA) within OU**

Students will have a number of practice learning experiences throughout their programme. During their PLEs responsibility for supervision and assessment will lie with practice supervisors, a practice assessor and an academic assessor (NMC 2018c, p8).

The PS, PA and PT/AA will work collaboratively to enable students to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in their professional role. Student supervision will reflect their learning needs and stage of learning.

## Role of the OU Practice Tutor/Academic Assessor

Unlike other universities who provide students with AA's only, the Open University provides students with PT/AA's. They are Registered Nurses with appropriate experience in the field of practice that students are studying. Although the role includes two titles, the role itself is undertaken by one person. It is an NMC requirement that "all students on an NMC approved programme are assigned to a different nominated academic assessor for each 'part' (level) of the education programme" (NMC 2018c, p8) and therefore the student's allocated PT/AA will change as they progress through each level of the programme.

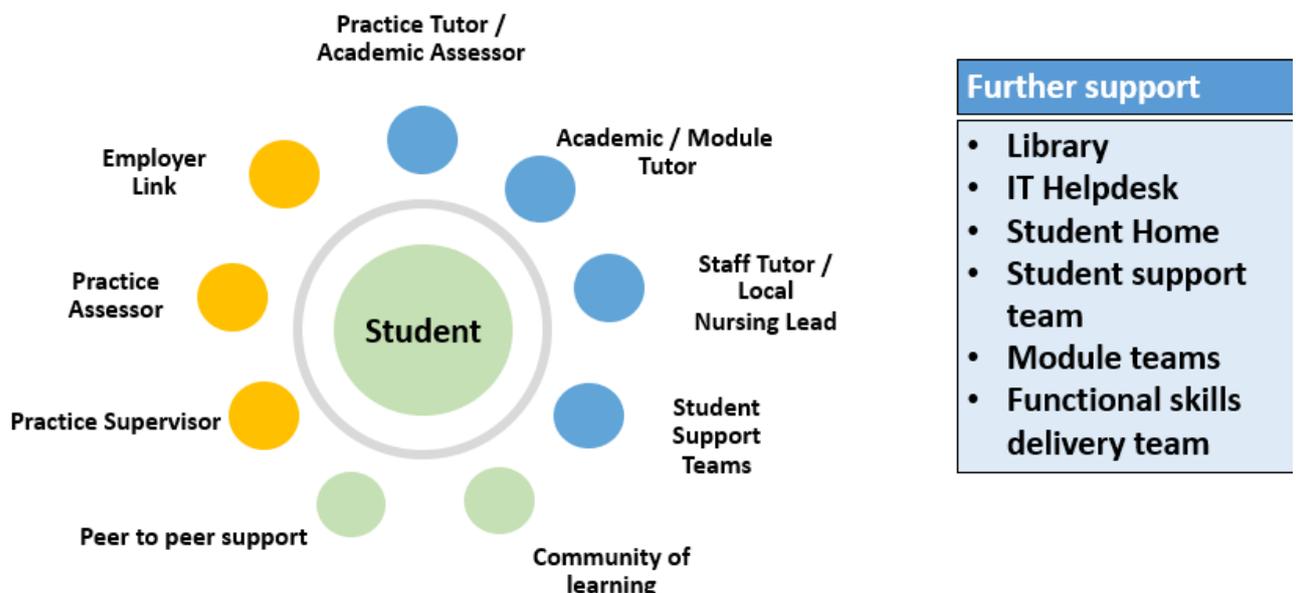
PT/AA's work closely with the nominated PS and make recommendations for student progression based on their assessments, PAD and other resources. They also collate and confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes in the academic environment for each Level of the programme. The PT element of the role also enables them to provide students with pastoral support within practice learning environments if required.

Students will meet with those who will be supporting them in practice (PS, PA, PT/AA) at the beginning of their practice experience to ensure they have learning opportunities available and appropriate supervision and support in place. Further meetings will take place between the student, their PS, PA (if required) and their PT/AA midway and at the end of each level of the programme. At the final meeting the students PA and PT/AA collate and confirm that all academic results and practice requirements have been met and recommend whether the student should progress to the next part of the programme.

## Student support

Students at the OU are provided with a range of support whilst completing the theoretical and practical components of the programme (Diagram 5).

**Diagram 5 – Student Support**



## Employer Responsibilities

The Scottish Government commissions the OU to recruit students onto the FN programme and they pay for the OU to deliver the programme. They also provide backfill money to employers to enable their staff to be released for supernumerary student placements and for study time for students to complete their theory.

Each NHS Board area has an employer link who works in partnership with an allocated OU Staff Tutor to support the recruitment and management of students on the programme. The employer link liaises with Line Managers to support these processes and their responsibilities include:

- Working with the OU to recruit and select members of staff who are suitable to undertake a work-based distance learning nursing degree programme
- Providing practice learning opportunities which meet the NMC (2018) Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes
- Participating in the audit of practice learning environments
- Identifying registered nurses/healthcare professionals who are suitably trained to supervise nursing students (practice supervisor) and registered nurses to assess nursing students (practice assessor) in clinical practice
- Ensuring that there are sufficient practice supervisors and practice assessors available to support nursing students on clinical placement, including cover for annual leave, sickness, special leave and staff leaving
- Releasing nursing students (employees) to undertake at least 2,300 hours of supernumerary practice across the whole of the nursing degree programme
- Working in consultation with the OU to identify and arrange alternative practice placements in other healthcare settings
- Releasing nursing students to take part in face to face or online facilitated learning as required by the programme
- Providing sufficient time in clinical practice for the nursing student to regularly meet with their practice assessor/supervisor in order to discuss their progress and areas for further development
- Informing the OU of any changes to the practice learning environment which might affect the learning opportunities for nursing students
- Immediately informing the OU if they become aware of any issues that might affect a student's fitness to practice

## **Appendix 1**

### **OU Future Nurse teaching and learning approach at Levels 2 & 3**

#### **Pre-registration nursing**

##### **What is Enquiry-Based Learning?**

Based on active student participation, Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) is a student-centred teaching approach that motivates and engages students with direct decision making, applied analytical thinking and results in competent, reflective, autonomous practitioners, able to think critically, who can effectively problem solve and respond in the ever-changing landscape of health and social care. With such claims that are consistently demonstrated through evaluations of the methodology, why would we not choose to use this as our approach to teaching and learning as students progress through their pre-registration nursing programme?

EBL helps bridge the practice-theory gap using teaching strategies that requires the student to research and enquire, relate and explain theoretical knowledge. Students need to discern what they learn, seek out appropriate sources of knowledge and support others through working as part of a small learning community. We plan on having students in field specific groups of no more than eight students which should help develop an identity with their field of practice and reduce much of the isolation that students often comment on when studying online. This is important for developing their confidence and ensuring that students remain proactive learners.

EBL can enable students to move from knowledge gathering to synthesis of multiple perspectives. EBL enables students to take a holistic approach of the whole person in context of case studies /scenarios, thus integrating knowledge with care and enabling them to apply theory to practice. EBL simulates what students face in practice when met with individuals with complex care needs. Learning through EBL provides students with the opportunity to be reflective, evidence-based and informed practitioners.

EBL constructs learning and knowledge that is contextual, participatory and collaborative. It allows students to co-create and co-produce as individuals and as part of a small group which we plan to be field specific. In EBL, students are active learners in that they will act as part of wider team but also facilitate their own knowledge, leadership and development at the individual level.

##### **How will the OU be using EBL?**

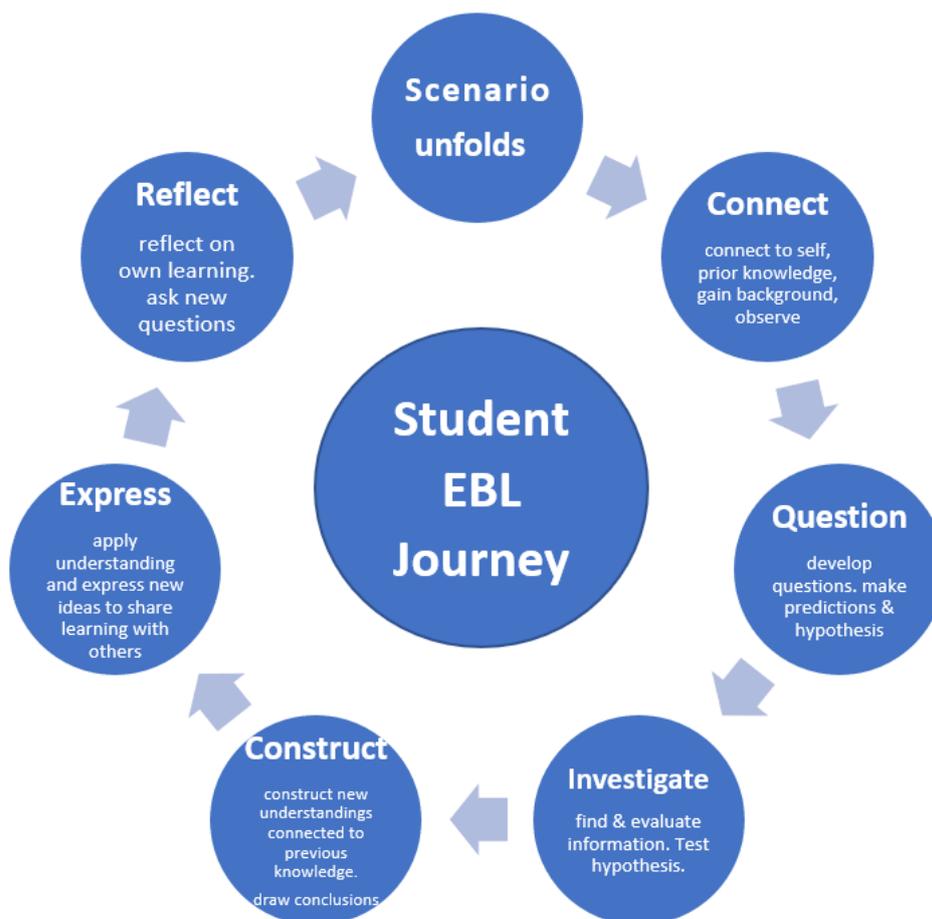
The Open University is going to use this innovative approach across the Future Nurse curriculum at Levels 2 & 3 (equivalent to Years 2 & 3 of a standard programme). EBL and its closely allied learning approach, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), have been adopted internationally for use in health care related curricula and there is much evidence in literature to reinforce the benefits as highlighted above. The term 'EBL' used in this paper is a broad umbrella term for a learning approach that is driven by and at its heart is a process of enquiry.

With EBL there is clear overlap with PBL. With PBL, the focus lies with a defined problem and students are challenged to look for knowledge which allows them to solve or address problems. EBL, by contrast allows for a more open-ended approach to the enquiry, and importantly for us, does not

label user needs as 'problems to be solved' but as lines of enquiry to 'understand better the experience of others'.

The OU EBL approach is graphically represented below. What this does not convey explicitly is that this is at times a fluid and evolving process which is spiral in nature. The process of EBL leads to new understanding and new questions (lines of enquiry), hence the process is constantly evolving for students. The EBL process is broken down for each tutorial session with learning managed by both student and facilitator. The cycle then repeats itself to give new information and provide greater insight on care.

We will use unfolding scenarios/case studies that develop across modules to deepen students understanding of care needs. This will allow tutor groups to adapt and develop triggers (lines of enquiry) for exploration between EBL sessions. This approach to EBL allows student to develop lines of enquiry of their choosing but also ones directed and supplemented by OU material, through Learning Guides, taught sessions, masterclasses and facilitator support. We anticipate within the scenarios to be able to look at issues affecting all fields and practice as well as delve into field specific content. The scenarios unfold gradually over time. The example below indicates how we plan to facilitate the EBL approach. It allows for 1 session where new material can be introduced before action plans, consolidation and review sessions occur. This accounts for 3 tutorial sessions in total for each scenario before a new scenario, with new challenges is examined.



## **How the tuition sessions will work**

**Tutorial session 1** will introduce the beginning of an unfolding scenario. This will allow students to CONNECT with prior knowledge, gather background information and question what they need to learn (triggers – lines of enquiry). The tutor has a role here in guiding students towards certain lines of enquiry where essential learning is necessary, for example physiology, skills rationale, public health initiatives etc. however students will be able to select lines of enquiry where they have personal interests based on the scenario.

**Between tutorial sessions 1 & 2** (2 weeks learning time – approximately 18 hours study time) students will investigate their allocated lines of enquiry from learning assets available on their module websites (prepared by the OU), from the library, the wider internet and drawing on local practices and policies. They will prepare to share their new understandings with their peers (CONSTRUCTION stage). Not all students will be examining the same materials. This approach is as much about developing confidence in student skills as effective communicators and as peer facilitators, so it is important that students engage in these processes as active learners and commit to their EBL study group.

**Tutorial session 2** will see students come back together as a small group and sharing (EXPRESSING) their learning with peers. The tutor will offer more of the scenario – gradually building up the complexity of care as students would see in practice. In doing so, students will develop further lines of enquiry which at this stage are likely to be field specific.

**Between tutorial sessions 2 & 3** (2 weeks learning time – approximately 18 hours study time) students will investigate their further lines of enquiry and prepare to share their new understandings with their peers.

**Tutorial session 3** will be a time for students to share further learning undertaken between tutorial session 2 & 3, reflect on learning across the scenario and discuss as a group how this relates to practice. It is anticipated at this stage that students will draw learning from all four fields and localised to their own field of practice.

This cycle is then repeated for subsequent scenarios for learning within the module.

## **What are the implications for this approach?**

For this to work, students must commit to attending study sessions with their peer group. Not only will this develop their professional identity as students within a specific field of practice, it will build relationships of trust across a small team. Additionally, the EBL approach should enable students to step out in confidence and avoid the sense of isolation often reported by students on distance learning programmes.

As stated above, EBL will only work if students commit and are proactive within their group. If they commit to undertake areas of enquiry, it is for them and their group that they are doing so. This increases their experience of professional responsibility that they need to take – a value that will be with them throughout their professional career.

Tuition as always in nursing programmes is mandatory. For our approach to EBL, we are bringing together students every two weeks for tutorials. We are mindful that in the past students have had the flexibility to attend one of two tutorials. This will not work for EBL as the groups will all be committing to differing triggers (lines of enquiry). Therefore, once the date is set for tuition, students will be expected to notify you of these dates and seek release during this time. Tuition can

be accessed via Tablets and Laptops with an internet access so tutorials do not necessary mean that students cannot work on these days – they need release time to attend their allocated sessions.

We are mindful that life happens and sometimes attendance is impossible. In these exceptional circumstances, students will be able to access a recording of their missed session however the frequency of remote access will be closely monitored. Students who are not engaging with their learning will be seen to discuss their potential continuation on programme. We will be discussing this with students as we prepare for induction from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the programme so that they will be clear of the expectations required of them as students.

Because we realise this is a big commitment for both students and employers, i.e. tuition every two weeks, the first week (Introductory tutorial) will provide opportunity for each student to feed into a group decision for when sessions will be held. It is anticipated that students will leave this session with a clear understanding of the arrangements in place for tuition and will notify you as employers on these required arrangements for the module that will run for 30 weeks within a calendar year.

### **Our scenarios**

EBL scenarios and their triggers should be situations that a student can recognise as being true to life. It is not intended to be a concise statement of clinical issues that can be resolved by applying a prescribed clinical intervention. The scenarios will be carefully authored so that they address the core concepts and learning outcomes needed to support achievement of module outcomes and contribute to the Future Nurse standards of proficiency. It is anticipated that the scenarios will simulate lively, constantly evolving student investigation that delves into complex care needs.

### **Your support**

We are excited to be promoting learning in this way. We see multiple benefits for student development arising from such an approach – especially with the student being proactive in their own learning, dissecting possible avenues of learning and pursuing these independently. If met with complex care in practice, these are skills that students need to demonstrate in order to be safe and competent practitioners. We hope that you will share in our excitement and support your students to actively engage in these processes.

Julie Messenger

Professional Lead, Nursing

The Open University