Frequently Asked Questions – Placements

How do I tell you where I want to go for my placement? All students must nominate online at http://www.cdu.edu.au/health/undergraduate-nursing for all their placement units by the deadline date. Dates are announced on the CDU website and sent to students via their student email account.

Do I have to nominate for all of my placement units for the degree at once? No. Students are required to nominate for each placement unit online in the year they plan to do the placement unit at http://www.cdu.edu.au/health/undergraduate-nursing

NUR344 and NUR346 are usually available during the summer semester. Students wanting to do these units are encouraged to nominate for semester 2 and follow up with an email to advise it is for the summer semester.

Is my nomination an enrolment in to a placement unit? No. Following confirmation in to a SB, students will then be able to enrol themselves.

Can I leave all of my placement units until the end of my degree? No. Students are expected to follow a recommended study plan. To offer students the best learning opportunity, study plans do not recommend that students leave all their placements to the end of the degree.

I failed a pre-requisite unit; can I still do my placement? No. Students need to successfully complete pre-requisite units and enrol in the relevant placement unit before they can attend placement.

When will I find out when my placement will be? Clinical placements are given at the discretion of the health care facilities. CDU Placement Office staff will negotiate with these facilities on behalf of students. The Placement Officers will notify students by email when a suitable placement is secured and will endeavour to give at least four weeks’ notice of the start date.

Sometimes a placement may be offered at short notice, if this occurs the Placement Officers may assign this straight to a student or may contact a number of students and offer it to the first available person. Due to the high demand for placements Australia-wide, there can be delays in securing placements.

If I nominate a facility as one of my preferences, does this mean I will go to that facility? Not necessarily. Placements are in very high demand throughout Australia, and all placements are issued at the discretion of healthcare facilities. These facilities may have placement requests from many education providers and may have preferred providers whose placement requests they prioritise. Therefore, CDU students may need to attend placements at facilities that they did not nominate preferences for.

Where will I go on placement? Students will be advised via their CDU student email account of their placement with at least four weeks’ notice where possible. CDU endeavours to source placement within a student’s home state and as close as possible to where the student lives, however, as placements are all given at the health facilities discretion this does not always happen. Students may need to travel outside of their local area and possibly outside of their home state in order to attend placement.

Why didn’t I get a placement at my preferred facility? Placements are given to CDU at the health facilities’ discretion. The preferred facility may have been contacted and declined the request or CDU have been unable to secure a practice agreement to place students with them.

I am a 3rd year student; can I do my NUR344 & NUR346 placements before the NUR343 CTB? No. Students must successfully complete NUR343 CTB before attending NUR343, NUR344 or NUR346 placements.

Can I refuse a placement that is assigned to me by the Placement Office staff? There needs to be a very good reason for a student to refuse a placement. A student who wants to cancel their placement should refer to the Extenuating Circumstances Guidelines for further information. This is available at [http://www.cdu.edu.au/health/undergraduate-nursing](http://www.cdu.edu.au/health/undergraduate-nursing)

Other students have heard about their placements, why haven’t I? Placements are offered to CDU at the health facilities discretion. When an appropriate placement becomes available, students will be notified with a provisional confirmation email. The Placement Officers hold class lists of student names and maintain records of students’ details to ensure everyone is given a placement in a timely manner in order to progress and nobody is ‘forgotten’.

Will I attend/complete placement in the semester I am enrolled in? The Placement Office work hard to secure placements within the enrolled semester. As placements are offered by health facilities and is dependent on their availability, a placement may not commence until very late in the semester or during a semester break. This may lead to delays with progression and potentially lead to the degree being longer than originally planned, however the Placement Office will do everything possible to avoid this and have students out on placement quickly.

To help the Placement Team, students are encouraged to advise if they are able to travel within their state for placements, they are encouraged to apply for remote or HWA funded placements, and by keeping pre-clinicals up to date at all times will help with short notice
placements being available to them if they come up.

If a placement unit is not completed within the semester of enrolment, because a placement has not yet been found or not yet been completed, a Practicum Ongoing (PO) grade can be awarded. This grade is applicable for two (2) admission periods to allow a placement opportunity. PO grades are issued with the approval of the Unit Coordinator.

How far will I have to travel from my home to attend placement? The Placement Office will seek placements for students within a 1-2 hour travel distance of their suburb/town where possible. Students may need to travel in their home state and if this occurs the Placement Office will advise if the facility have discounted accommodation available. There are times when students may be required to travel interstate, however this is uncommon.

All students have been informed via the enrolment conditions that they may have to travel within or outside their home state in order to complete placement units. More information about enrolment conditions can be found at:  

My placement is a long way from my home. Why couldn’t I get a placement closer to home? Placements across Australia are in extremely high demand and a lot of negotiating is required for each placement. All placements are issued at the discretion of healthcare facilities. When a student is assigned to a placement a long way from their home location it is through necessity rather than choice. Placements with excessive travel time (2 hours or more each way) will likely be discussed with the student prior to being allocated.

Can I go on placement in another state? Students are not permitted to do their placements in another state unless the student has extenuating circumstances and permission from the Placement Office or has applied for a remote or HWA placement in the Northern Territory.

I am an interstate student, if I go on a remote placement in the NT is accommodation provided? Students are responsible for their own accommodation and travel requirements. In some circumstances in some NT locations, accommodation may be made available by the facility. Students undertaking placement in Darwin or Alice Springs can contact International House in Darwin http://www.cdu.edu.au/ntiv/ or Alice Springs http://www.cdu.edu.au/campuses-centres/alice-springs-campus check if on-campus accommodation is available.

What travel and accommodation arrangements do I need to consider? Due to placement limitations travel and accommodation needs to be factored into student planning, as well as leave requirements from normal place of employment. Students are responsible for meeting all costs associated with attending placement.

Can I do just 2 or 3 days a week for my placement? No. placements are not offered on a part time basis. Part time placement does not provide students with the best opportunity to consolidate their practice. Students with special requirements are asked to contact Equity Services at disability@cdu.edu.au to discuss a Placement Plan.

I have an exam during placement, what should I do? Examinations should be discussed with the Unit Coordinator and Placement Officer prior to attending placement. If the Placement Office have advance notice from the student, they can try to negotiate with the healthcare facility so that the student can have that day off placement (and make the missed shift up later). NOTE: makeup shifts and rostered days off are all issued at the discretion of the healthcare facility.

I have just found out that I am pregnant, what do I do about my placement? Pregnancy does not preclude students from attending clinical placement; however some clinical placements may be potentially harmful to the developing foetus and to the pregnant student.

Pregnant students are expected to notify the Clinical Coordinator and Placement Office of their pregnancy and expected due date. Students will not be allocated to a placement in an area where there may be particular health and safety issues, e.g. radiation, working with infectious disease, cytotoxic drugs and anaesthetic gases.

CDU reserve the right to not permit a student to attend a placement if the student is in the third
trimester of pregnancy or within the first 8 weeks after birth.

If I know dates when I am unavailable for placement what should I do? A student may email a request to the Placement Office to not go on placement during certain dates. However, the Placement Office cannot guarantee that they will be able to meet this request. Students are expected to be available to attend placement once they are enrolled in their placement unit. Placements are in short supply Australia-wide and students who are unavailable for placement may delay their course progression, as it could be difficult to secure alternative placements.

Can I organise my own placement with a facility? No. Students are not permitted to contact Health Facilities or other universities to organise placements. Students can provide the Placement Team with information about potential placement opportunities. Credible calling health facilities to see whether they have available placements or whether they take CDU students is not a lead and will be considered as arranging a placement(s) and may lead to failure of the unit.

Can I organise my own shifts and rosters? No. All rosters are drawn up by the healthcare facility staff who need to take staffing and precepting requirements into account. Students are not permitted to negotiate or make roster requests to the facility. If a student is concerned about a roster they are given, they need to direct their request through to the Placement Office at Nurplaccoord@cdu.edu.au.

I missed some shifts during placement because I was sick/there was a public holiday. What should I do and do I need to make up the time? Students must notify the health facility, the Unit Coordinator and the Placement Office as soon as possible if they will not be able to attend a placement due to illness or another unforeseen circumstance.

Students should identify on the first day of placement a number to call and the process to follow should they be absent or late. It is a professional responsibility to inform the health facility if they are unable to attend a rostered shift or will be late. Failure to do so indicates that the student is not meeting the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Competency Standards.

Students must not put patients at risk due to illness. This is a professional responsibility and so students should not attend placement if they are unwell. If a student does not attend placement due to illness or other reason, the student must immediately notify the health facility, the Unit Coordinator and the Placement Office as mentioned above. In the case of illness, students must ensure a Medical Certificate or Statutory Declaration is obtained to account for missed hours; this must be attached to Clinical Assessment Portfolio for grade to be allocated.

The Placement Office will liaise with the student and health facility to secure appropriate “makeup time”. Students need to complete the total required hours for all placement units and all absences must be made up.

Sometimes student placements occur over public holidays. Students should attend placement on a public holiday if the health facility deems there to be adequate supervision for the student. If the health facility cannot support a student on a public holiday, the student must notify the Placement Office and the Unit Coordinator.

Is my lunch break counted towards my placement hours? As in any workplace breaks are not included in working hours. Therefore an 8 hour shift will mean an 8 ½ hour day. (Students have half an hour for lunch).

I have to attend an orientation day outside of my placement dates. Does this count towards my placement hours? Yes. Orientation is included in the placement hours.

Am I part of the workforce? No. All Bachelor of Nursing students have supernumerary status while on clinical placements. This means students are additional to the workforce requirement and staffing ratios. Students are present in the placement setting as a learner and not as a member of staff.

Do I get paid while on placement? No. Students will be on placement as a student, not an employee. Students are not covered under an employment contract while on an authorised clinical placement and payment for students on placement does not apply.
I am an EN; will this make a difference to my clinical placements? No. There are significant and complex differences in the role and responsibilities as a student on placement to that of paid employment as an Enrolled Nurse. Firstly, students on placement are not covered by an employment contract or employee insurance while on placement. Instead, students must comply with the policies of Charles Darwin University. Students are on placement as an undergraduate student. Students who work out of the student scope of practice will fail the clinical unit.

Can I do my clinical placement at my place of employment? Possibly – with conditions. The Unit Coordinator for the clinical unit needs to be assured that conflicts of interest are excluded. Avoiding a conflict of interest usually means that students must not attend placement on the wards where they are rostered as an employee and should not be preceptored by a staff member who they regularly work with.