



PROTOCOL IN THE EVENT OF UNSUCCESSFUL CLINICAL PLACEMENT AND ENACTMENT OF A LEARNING PLAN

HIGHER DIPLOMA IN MIDWIFERY (POST RGN) PROGRAMME

The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems along with our clinical partner, the National Maternity Hospital, is committed to supporting students as they prepare to become registered midwives.

The background to the following protocol is the need to guide students who are requiring further support in meeting her¹ MidCAT requirements during clinical placements. The specific needs of each student will be considered on an individual basis. This protocol will be enacted when a student **fails** to meet the required standards in an assessment (MidCAT) on an individual placement.

Description of Clinical Modules, Progression and Derogations.

There are 4 clinical placement modules integral to this programme-Midwifery Clinical Placement A (10 credits), Midwifery Clinical Placement B (15 credits), and Midwifery Clinical Placement C (15 credits), and Specialist Clinical Placement module (10 credits). Students must successfully complete Midwifery Clinical Placement A, in order to progress to Midwifery Clinical Placement B, and Midwifery Clinical Placement B must be successfully completed in order to progress to Midwifery Clinical Placement C.

Each of these modules are composed of placements in each of the core maternity care areas. Students must successfully complete **each placement in Antenatal, Labour and Delivery and Postnatal care in order to successfully complete each module**. A MidCAT document is utilised for each placement, and the student must submit the 3 successfully completed MidCAT documents to pass the module and to progress on the programme.

If the student fails to successfully complete the placement in **one or more** of the maternity care areas, she will be required to **repeat** the placement, or placements, in which she was unsuccessful, as detailed below.

The student will not be required to repeat the placement in the maternity care area which she has successfully completed.

The Programme Director is personal tutor to all students on this programme.

¹ The pronoun 'her' and 'she' will be utilised for convenience throughout this document, are intended to include 'him/his', and are not intended to be exclusive.

Enactment of protocol

This protocol will be enacted when a student has significant difficulties in meeting standards during a clinical placement, and outlines the events that should follow when a student fails to meet the required standards and competencies in the final assessment (MidCAT).

The following actions should occur to assist the student in meeting the required standards in any MidCAT assessment while on any individual clinical placement.

The steps identified reflect the series of events commencing at the commencement of the placement and follows a series up until the repeat and final opportunity for the student.

Step 1-Identification of progress/difficulties in meeting standards from commencement of placement up to the Intermediate interview

- If the student is having significant difficulties in achieving the MidCAT standards it is vital that these difficulties are identified **as early as is possible** in order to allow time for improvement within that clinical placement period, and preferably before the Intermediate meeting occurs. Concerns should be documented by the preceptor/co-preceptor, and the Clinical Co-ordinator should be informed of the specific issues raised. The Clinical Midwifery Tutor and the preceptor/co-preceptor will support the student in addressing the competencies that need improvement in the period up to the Intermediate meeting.

The critical elements with which the student requires focused and additional support in order to successfully progress on the placement must be specifically identified and documented

Step 2: Intermediate Meeting and 'Intermediate Learning Plan'

All students should have an **Intermediate Learning Plan'** documented.

For students experiencing difficulties:

- If significant difficulties in meeting standards are identified, they should be formally addressed in the Intermediate interview. The preceptor/co-preceptor will also contact and inform the Clinical Co-ordinator of the specific issues identified. The Clinical Co-ordinator will contact the student's Personal Tutor by telephone and email. The Personal Tutor/UCD nominee may meet with the student at this or at any time. The student is also advised to personally contact her Personal Tutor for additional support during the remaining weeks of the placement

- An 'intermediate learning plan' is developed with the student. In this plan detailed notes of the student's learning needs and the proposed actions to address these needs are made. This learning plan should be fully documented in the MidCAT document.

The preceptor/co-preceptor may request the presence at the Intermediate meeting of the Clinical Co-ordinator or Personal Tutor.

The preceptor/co-preceptor/Clinical Midwifery Tutor/Clinical Co-ordinator will support the student throughout the remaining weeks of the placement, focusing on the student's learning needs.

The preceptor should document any further meetings/observations with the student in the period between the intermediate and final meeting. This can be documented briefly giving dates and a description of the support offered.

Step 3 Final Meeting.

- If it is anticipated immediately prior to the final meeting that the student has not met the required standards in the MidCAT for that placement, the preceptor/co-preceptor will inform the Clinical Co-ordinator who will in turn inform the Personal Tutor by telephone and by e-mail.
- The Clinical Co-ordinator and/or the Personal Tutor can be present for the final meeting if requested by the student and/or preceptor/co-preceptor.
- A record of how the student has not met the standards will be documented in detail by the preceptor/co-preceptor in the Final Meeting outcome sheet in the MidCAT. This record must clearly identify the critical elements which the student has not successfully achieved and the rationale or evidence to support the unsuccessful award.

Step 4-Implementing a 'Final Learning Plan' after an 'unsuccessful' Clinical Placement

- The student, preceptor/co-preceptor, Clinical Coordinator, Personal Tutor (or UCD nominee) will arrange to meet (if possible by the end of the placement but normally within one week of the end of the placement).
- The purpose of this meeting is to discuss with the student her learning needs and draw up a 'Final Learning Plan' that will guide and support her in her subsequent clinical learning.
- This 'final Learning Plan' will identify the student's learning needs and guide her in areas that require further development during both her subsequent and repeat clinical placements. Copies of the Learning Plan will be retained by the student, the Clinical Co-ordinator and the Personal Tutor.
- The duration of the repeat clinical placement will be of the same duration as the original clinical placement with a new MidCAT document supplied. The assessment will be the same level as the original MidCAT.
- During the Final Learning Plan meeting the 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' clinical placement, it is mandatory that the student presents her 'Final Learning Plan' to her new preceptor so that she can avail of the required support.
 - However, in exceptional circumstances, including safety issues, an individualised plan for progression and learning will be agreed.

Pending the repeat placement, and in consultation with the clinical partner, the student may progress to the next scheduled clinical placement. In order for the student to maximise the benefits of her learning plan and improve her clinical learning outcomes in both the medium and long term, she is expected to discuss her learning needs (as outlined in the Learning Plan) with her preceptor in the subsequent clinical placement. The personal tutor should emphasise that the domains of competence are pertinent across all clinical placements/assessments. It should also be emphasised that the opportunity to receive early support from a preceptor/co-preceptor is in the best interest of the student.

Step 4 -MidCAT Presentation to Personal Tutor.

- The student presents the MidCAT to her personal tutor. The student contacts the Clinical Co-ordinator to arrange a date for a repeat clinical placement, which will be the second and final opportunity to repeat the clinical module.

This placement will occur after the 'fail' grade has been recorded at the next available Programme Examination Board.

- The repeat clinical module will incur a repeat fee.

Step 5- Repeat (and final) Clinical Placement.

- The student is offered a second and final opportunity to repeat the clinical placement/module. A new MidCAT is provided. This clinical placement will be of the same duration as the original clinical placement. The assessment will be the same level as the original MidCAT.

- As early as is convenient on the repeat clinical placement, the student, Clinical Co-ordinator (or personal tutor), and new preceptor will hold a preliminary meeting with the student. During this meeting the student must present the 'Final Learning Plan' to her new preceptor, outlining her documented learning needs and the areas in which the student requires additional support.

- Given that this is the final opportunity for the student in this clinical placement/module, the personal tutor/UCD nominee in their supportive role shall meet the student at a convenient time soon after the intermediate meeting.

- The final meeting follows the same protocol as outlined in step 2 if the student fails to attain the required standards.

- Presentation of this MidCAT to the personal tutor is mandatory.

- In the event of the student being unsuccessful in this repeat attempt the student will be considered ineligible to continue on the Higher Diploma in Midwifery programme. Normally no subsequent attempt can be considered except through application to the Programme Board.

Consultation processes

As students are also employees of the clinical partner, in the event of the student failing to successfully complete the clinical placement in question at first attempt, the Programme Director informs the Practice Development Co-ordinator of the outcome and the learning plan for repeating the placement.

If the student fails to successfully complete the repeat placement, the Programme Director informs the Practice Development Co-ordinator, the Director of Midwifery and Nursing, the Director of CASC, the Subject Head (Midwifery), and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Teaching and Learning of the outcome. In exceptional circumstances, and following consultation and agreement of the above individuals, the student may apply to the Programme Board to have a further repeat attempt at successfully completing the placement.

The student's progress is referred to the next Undergraduate Programme Board for consideration.

Reviewed February 2016

Description of Outcomes	
Outcome	Description
PASS (P)	MidCAT standards have been achieved. The student is required to complete outstanding clinical time before completing the programme.
Incomplete (I)	MidCAT standards have not been achieved, as the student cannot be assessed due to insufficient time in the clinical area, and the student has no extenuating circumstances. An 'I' grade is awarded. The Incomplete (I) will only become a Pass (P) once the overall standards have been achieved. The student cannot progress to registration until they complete all outstanding clinical time.
Extenuating Circumstances (IX)	MidCAT standards have not been achieved and time is outstanding due to extenuating circumstances (See current policy document on extenuating circumstances http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/pol_ext_circum.pdf (UCD 2010)) The student is required to undertake a supplemental placement and this is considered a first attempt and will not incur a repeat fee. The MidCAT standards required for supplemental placements will focus on the unsuccessful competencies. The duration of the supplemental placement may vary to meet the needs of individual students. In some circumstances students may be required to attend the full duration of the original placement following consultation with the clinical partners. Full attendance is required on all clinical placements.
Fail (F)	MidCAT standards have not been achieved during the first placement. The student is offered a second opportunity to repeat the competencies in a new MidCAT and in a clinical placement the same duration as the original. Other rules in relation to the duration of the clinical placement may apply at the discretion of the UCD Programme Board and clinical partners. Pending the repeat placement, and in consultation with the clinical partner, the student may progress to the next scheduled clinical placement. The repeat placement is the final opportunity a student may have to successfully complete the clinical placement, or placements. If the student is unsuccessful following this opportunity, the student will not be permitted to continue on the Higher Diploma in Midwifery programme. The final decision will be made at the next School Programme Board, following consultation with the clinical partner.
No Grade (NG)	Failure to attend and/or present a completed MidCAT assessment to the personal tutor, with no evidence of extenuating circumstances, will result in an NG outcome which is treated the same as a fail grade and a failed clinical attempt. The student will need to undertake a repeat placement which is a second and final attempt and will incur a repeat fee

Approved CASC Chair

Approved Programme Board Chair