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Student Survival Guide

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What to be prepared for

If you've been used to the traditional 'mentor' way of learning in practice you need to be prepared to change your mind set on how placement will work – be open minded and expect to feel challenged (in a good way!)

You will spend much less time with your named mentor than you're used to from the previous model of learning. So be prepared to take the initiative and fill out accurate learning logs so that they are aware of what you have been doing on your shifts and make sure you get to catch up with them when appropriate



Be open and willing to work with students from different universities and at different levels of training... Forget the Inter University rivalry. Welcome and get to know students from Universities ... we are all in this together! Take the opportunity to get to know your

fellow students. Maybe try to take your first few breaks all together and really go into detail about what you are confident in and what you are apprehensive about. Take time to bond! One day you may be delegating work to others and the next being directed by someone else – the essence of Synergy is students working together to deliver the best, holistic patient care so you really need to be comfortable with your peers. You never know you might even finish placement as friends and not just colleagues!

Put aside your views on what it means to be a first, second or third year. We all have different and varying levels of prior experience. So third years can learn from first years as well as the other way around! Be honest about what you do or do not know and what you feel confident in or not. Put the ego aside and be willing to learn from anyone and everyone and enjoy the opportunity to teach others and gain confidence in what you know

Be willing to speak out and ask for help or flag up what is not working... but also remember to give praise where it's due and appreciate what works well. This works in two ways – as students we need to feel confident enough to voice our concerns but staff must also be receptive to our thoughts and questions. Just because we are on a Synergy placement doesn't mean we have to know it all and can't ask for help and guidance

Be proactive in ensuring you get what you need from the start of a placement. Orientation to your placement area is key and, Synergy or not, you will still need an introduction, discussions about your previous experience, delegation of a named mentor and careful organisation of off duty to ensure all students get the most out of Synergy

"Be prepared to learn how to complete your nursing documentation in a different way! With students joining together from different universities and trusts you will all be used to different ways of doing things. For example, you might find yourself going from all electronic back to handwritten documentation. Some students find this a bit of a challenge so give yourself time to adapt! Likewise, trust policies all differ so if you find yourself in a different trust as part of Synergy ensure the staff you work with are aware so they can help you get used to any changes"

GM Synergy – what can it do for you?

- ✓ See Synergy as the amazing learning opportunity that it is.
- ✓ Enjoy the feeling of greater autonomy and control
- ✓ Remember staff and students need to work together to make it successful.
- ✓ It can feel daunting on a busy ward to approach staff but the greater number of students in an area has advantages for them too - so be bold!

GM Synergy – Top Tips!

- First day, have an introduction with other students and members of staff. Have current students show new students around the ward and surrounding areas.
- A two minute introduction with nurse and healthcare assistants in bay so staff can gain an insight into what students are capable of already, as well as what skills they want/need to develop.
- All students to work on similar shifts (i.e. work together and learn together!).
- Last day of each week: spend 2-4 hours catching up and learning from each other and reflecting.
- Student-led student board! Let students be able to update the student board with information on spokes, numbers, etc. (e.g. 'spoke of the week!').
- Learning logs: have a dedicated folder for learning logs to be kept in and updated, with student off-duty included.
- Have students vote on 'best coach of the month!' Each coach will get a certificate to put in their portfolio, with feedback on what they did great to help future nurses learn.



- Student-led skills sessions. Have the more experienced students teach the newer students skills needed on their placement (e.g. wound care, BM protocol).
- Medication of the week: have a common medication named at the beginning of the week and have students teach themselves about its uses.
- Embrace learning from your peers and fully engage with Synergy. By the students, for the students!