

NURSING+
MIDWIFERY

Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing (RUSON) Program 2022

NUM Handbook



Western Health

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Our Vision

Together, caring for the West - our patients, staff, community and environment.

Our Values

Compassion - Consistently acting with empathy and integrity.

Accountability- Taking responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Respect- Respect for the rights, beliefs and choice of every individual.

Excellence - Inspiring and motivating, innovation and achievement.

Safety- Prioritising safety as an essential part of everyday practice.

Our Purpose

Working collaboratively to provide quality health and well-being services for the people of the West.

Introduction

Purpose

This document is a practical guide to assist the Nurse Unit Managers at Western Health in the implementation of third-tier paid workforce model known as the Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing model (RUSONs). This role is clearly defined in clause 106 of the Nurse and Midwives (Victorian public sector) (single interest employers) enterprise agreement 2020-2024 (the EA).

This guide draws on the experiences of Victorian public health services that have already successfully implemented the RUSON role in their nursing teams and we would like to especially thank Ballarat Health Services who generously shared their resources with other health services. In addition, this resource draws upon the knowledge gained through the 2020-2021 RUSON Pilot at Western Health and subsequent evaluation and recommendations.

Context

What is a RUSON?

A RUSON is a person currently enrolled at a university to undertake undergraduate nursing or midwifery studies, who is registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency as a student nurse, and who at commencement, has successfully completed not less than 12 months of the Bachelor of Nursing (or graduate entry to practice nursing degree) degree or 24 months of the combined Bachelor of Nursing & Midwifery degree.

How do we know that the RUSON model works?

We know from experience in other health services as well as the Western Health RUSON pilot program that RUSONs are a welcome addition to the nursing, bringing benefits for both patients and staff.

RUSON Scope of Practice

Duties and breadth of RUSON role

The RUSON works as part of the nursing team, assisting registered nurses with patient care interventions and activities as directed, in accordance with the nursing care plan and under the delegation, and supervision, of qualified and experienced registered nurses. The RUSON role is above standard nurse or midwife to patient ratios.

A list of activities that may be delegated in accordance with the professional judgement of the supervising Registered Nurse can be found in the scope of practice document on the nursing and midwifery intranet page. The duties and activities in this document can be delegated in accordance with the level of achieved educational preparation, and assessed competence of the RUSON by an experienced Registered Nurse.

[RUSON/M Program - Nursing & Midwifery \(wh. <https://westerly.wh.org.au/nursing-midwifery/workforce/ruson-m-program/org.au>\)](https://westerly.wh.org.au/nursing-midwifery/workforce/ruson-m-program/org.au)

The RUSON can only work within the parameters of the position description.

The position descriptions for a RUSON can be located on the nursing and midwifery intranet page.

[RUSON/M Program - Nursing & Midwifery \(wh. <https://westerly.wh.org.au/nursing-midwifery/workforce/ruson-m-program/org.au>\)](https://westerly.wh.org.au/nursing-midwifery/workforce/ruson-m-program/org.au)

Establishing delegation and supervision

In order to establish a clear framework for the delegation of tasks and activities and the provision of effective clinically focused supervision, there must be a clear and shared understanding of the role that the RUSON plays within the nursing team, and of the skills and competencies that a RUSON will be expected to demonstrate.

Competencies are required to be signed off from an experienced Registered Nurse as “Independent” prior to the RUSON undertaking the activity without direct supervision. Competencies can be signed off on first attempt. The RUSON competency tool is provided in their workbook and Appendix 3 for reference.

Integrating RUSONs in your Team

Recruitment

Initial recruitment and on-boarding of the RUSONs will be facilitated by the NMWU team. Any vacant EFT throughout the year after the initial recruitment should be replaced and is the responsibility of the NUM the RUSON is employed to.

EBA requirements

The Nurses EA stipulates only one RUSON is to be rostered per shift.

Rostering

The RUSONs will be recruited to your ward as part of your team and each inpatient ward will be allocated 2.95 EFT which equates to RUSONs covering 16 hours per day, 7 days a week.

The same quality roster rules apply to rostering the RUSONs; they are able to be rostered across all 3 shifts. The following shift times are required to be used:

- RUS D 0700-1530
- RUS E 1300-2130
- RUS N 2100-0730

It is preferred that each day, there will be a RUSON rostered to ensure coverage on 2 shifts. This will guarantee that the 2.95 EFT of RUSONs will be spread evenly across the fortnight.

As members of your team, the RUSONs directly report to you. They have been provided with information about roster requests, including Annual leave, and Personal leave.

In the event of unplanned personal leave, the RUSONs are advised to contact the NUM or NIC prior to their shift. If a RUSON does not attend their shift a well-being check should be made.

Rostering challenges

An important aim when recruiting RUSONs is to minimise rostering challenges caused by the impact of clinical placements. Considerations to alleviate rostering challenges could include:

- widening the catchment of RUSON to multiple universities (where possible) to reduce clinical placement unavailability, thereby increasing the number of shifts that can be covered throughout the year
- ensuring that there is a combination of second and third-year students employed, as well as employing a greater pool of students to enhance availability
- RUSONs should identify their scheduled clinical placements as early as possible so that leave without pay or annual leave can be granted for these periods.

What if a RUSON on my ward has obtained RN registration?

A variation must occur to process the change in pay to that of a Registered Nurse; however the scope of practice remains as a RUSON until the RUSON's graduate program commences.

Code of Conduct

The Western Health Code of Conduct can be accessed on the Intranet and expectations should be no different to any other team member. For some RUSONs this may be their very first professional employment opportunity so a nurturing environment and good team role modelling will fast track their knowledge and awareness of expected professional behaviours.

Uniform

There is no specific RUSON uniform and each RUSON will be delineated with their name badge, ID and RUSON sticker. University uniforms are not an acceptable alternative.

Management & Support arrangements

As with any other ward staff member, each RUSON is employed by individual wards and managed by you (Nurse Unit Manager).

You are responsible for:

- conducting formal performance reviews
- approving and coordinating requests for leave and other entitlements
- establishing training and development plans
- supporting staff and dealing with other personnel or welfare issues.

In addition, the RUSONs will be supported by the following:

- Professional Lead –Tony McGillion (Director of Nursing and Midwifery)
- Education
- Ward Staff
- RUSON debrief Sessions

Debriefing is an opportunity to discuss, reflect, and learn from our experiences and a time to consider how things are going, identify what is going well, and consider areas support is needed. By reflecting on, and recognising the knowledge, skills, and attitudes used in their experiences, the RUSONs will be able to better develop personal awareness and insight into their practice, helping them to identify and manage stress.

People & Numbers to Know

Tony McGillion Director of Nursing and Midwifery (Inspiring Innovation) 0466 925 108

Lisa Gatzonis Director of Nursing and Midwifery (NMWU) 0466 943 769

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. Can a RUSON work on all shifts?

Yes. RUSONs can work all shifts.

2. Can a RUSON work night duty?

Yes. RUSONs can work night duty.

3. Can a RUSON work on a public holiday?

Yes. RUSONs can work on public holidays.

4. Can a RUSON work with a team of nurses or just one nurse?

RUSONs work with the team based model of care. This may refer to a team of 1, 2, 3 or 4 nurses. RUSONs usually commence with work being assigned to them by the ANUM or Nurse in Charge or Team Leader, who delegates their duties. This may include being assigned to work with one nurse, one team of nurses or multiple teams of nurses over the shift.

5. Can a RUSON work with an Enrolled Nurse?

Can a RUSON receive a delegated task from an Enrolled Nurse?

Why does it say in the activity list that a RUSON can't accept delegation from an Enrolled Nurse?

RUSONs can work with an Enrolled Nurse as part of a team but cannot accept delegated tasks/orders from an Enrolled Nurse.

Supervision of a RUSON needs to be from a Registered Nurse.

RUSONs can't be supervised by an Enrolled Nurse.

Remember that Enrolled Nurses are required to work under the direct or indirect supervision of a Registered Nurse and require a named and accessible Registered Nurse at all times for support and guidance of their own practice.

6. Can a RUSON work with a student nurse on placement?

RUSONs can work with student nurses as part of a health care team but both the RUSON and Student Nurse need to be supervised by a Registered Nurse and have the 'activity' they are doing delegated to them by the Registered Nurse.

7. Can a RUSON work as a special for a patient?

RUSONs are not allowed to care for their own patient or patients in accordance with legislation from the Safe Patient Care Act.

8. Can a RUSON work with their own load of patients?

Can a RUSON have one or two or three patients of their own?

RUSONs cannot care for their own patient or load of patients. Their role is always supernumerary (does not carry a patient load) in the nursing team.

9. Can a RUSON insert an indwelling catheter etc.?

RUSONs can only complete activities or nursing tasks that are on their ward specific activity list. Even if they are capable and competent of inserting an indwelling catheter, they are not allowed to do so if it is not on the approved list.

This example (insertion of an indwelling catheter) can be used in other situations where RUSONs are asked to do tasks that are not on their activity list.

RUSONs may be capable of doing a technical skill as a result of a learning lab at university or experience at university but this does not permit them to perform at this higher level when working as a RUSON.

RUSONs are only permitted to complete technical skills as per the activity list.

A RUSON may tell you that,

'Yes, I can do THAT but I am not allowed to as it is not on my activity list'.

This a safe statement and should be encouraged and acknowledged.

10. How can I check what technical skills a RUSON can do?

Refer to the RUSON scope of practice document on the nursing and midwifery intranet page and review the duties and activities that the RUSON has been assessed as competent. The RUSON should be keeping a record log of the activities and duties that have been assessed in their workbook.

11. Can a RUSON do a toileting round?

RUSONs are able to meet patient hygiene needs as per their activity list, so are able to assist patients with their toileting requirements.

However, as they are working under the supervision and delegation of a Registered Nurse it will be highly unlikely that this one nurse would be providing care for an entire unit and as such, delegate this to the RUSON.

RUSONs can meet hygiene needs of a group of clients as delegated by the RN.

WH would like to ensure that the RUSONs work is enjoyable and variable and as such, doing a toileting round of an entire unit (20-30 patients) is not something we envisage should be part of the RUSON's core work.

Meeting hygiene needs for a group of patients (as delegated by the RN) is likely to happen during every shift as this is an activity of daily living for patients.

12. Can two RUSONS work on the same shift?

As per the EA, only one RUSON can work per shift.

13. Can a RUSON call in sick for their duty?

RUSONs are WH employees and as such, have the same benefits and entitlements as all other employees. RUSONS must phone in sick to the NIC or NUM at least 2 hours prior to their shift and produce the appropriate certificates as needed. If the RUSON fails to call in sick, the NUM or NIC must complete a welfare check.

14. What happens when a RUSON needs to attend clinical placement and can't work their rostered shifts?

RUSONs are contracted to work minimum 0.1 EFT to a maximum of 0.8 EFT

RUSONs are encouraged to request rostered days off and shift preferences just like other WH staff in order to ensure they can meet their contracted hours with WH and still meet their future requirements for registration.

WH Unit Managers (you) will work with the RUSONs to accommodate their requests and ensure the contracted hours are worked and clinical placement shifts are able to be accommodated. Leave without pay can be provided to RUSONs for clinical placement and should be recorded in RosterOn.

15. Are RUSONs entitled to take annual leave and personal leave days?

RUSONs are WH employees and have the same benefits and entitlements as other employees. This means that they can request annual leave days via the roster request system in their unit and also take personal leave if required.

16. Do RUSONs have a RUSON uniform?

Can they wear their student nurse uniform as a RUSON?

RUSONs do not have a specific uniform. The RUSON must wear scrubs, ID badge, name badge and RUSON sticker (attached to PPE or sleeve of scrub top) when working as a RUSON.

No university branded items must be worn at work to avoid role confusion for the RUSON, our staff, your university and our patients.

If a RUSON doesn't have clean scrubs to wear on duty they may wear clothing that adheres to the WH dress code procedure (in addition to relevant PPE).

The RUSON sticker (see image below) can be worn on the sleeve of the scrub top once face shields are no longer mandatory.



Appendix 1: Performance Review and Development Appraisals

Interim Appraisal

Due: 3 months into program

- This is completed by the NUM or delegate.
- Prior to the due date, the RUSON will contact the NUM to make a time to complete the appraisal. Otherwise it is the NUMs responsibility to ensure the appraisal is completed.

Summative Appraisal

Due: 6 months into program

- This is completed by the NUM or delegate.
- Prior to the due date, the RUSON will contact the NUM to make a time to complete the appraisal. Otherwise, it is the NUMs responsibility to ensure the appraisal is completed.

Both RUSON and NUM retain a copy of the appraisal for their records.

APPRAISAL TOOL



Performance Review and Development Plan for the
Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing (RUSON)

Western Health

AT WESTERN HEALTH WE ARE COMMITTED TO HIGH QUALITY CARE THAT IS SAFE, PERSON-CENTERED, RIGHT AND COORDINATED – WE ARE COMMITTED TO BEST CARE. PLEASE SEE THE WESTERN HEALTH INTRANET FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE BEST CARE FRAMEWORK.

A performance review or appraisal is a regular assessment on how you are performing in your role as a RUSON at Western Health. It can help to identify your individual learning needs, your continuing development requirements, and how you are performing in your RUSON role. Appraisals are an integral part of your learning while a RUSON at Western Health. You may be familiar with appraisals through your university placements. As a student nurse, your appraisals will be an additional tool in your applications for a graduate program.

Before your performance review, complete the **Appraisal Reflection**. Consider how you have reflected Western Health's Organisational Values and Best Care Framework. Once you have completed this, speak with either a Registered Nurse who you have been working with regularly, or with your RUSON Clinical Nurse Educator, to organise a time to meet and discuss your performance. This is an opportunity for your Reviewer to provide feedback on your performance and give you some overall comments. You can then reflect on the feedback you receive in the **Comments and Feedback** area.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING THE HARD COPY OF YOUR APPRAISALS.
FORWARD A SCANNED COPY TO YOUR NURSE UNIT MANAGER FOR THEIR RECORDS.

Western Health Organisation Values

Compassion	Consistently acting with empathy and integrity
Accountability	Empowering our staff to serve our community
Respect	For the rights, beliefs and choice of every individual
Excellence	Inspiring and motivating innovation and achievement
Safety	Working in an open, honest and safe environment

Personal Details

Name:

Date:

Position Title: RUSON

Reviewer's Name & Designation:

Ward:

Interim Appraisal Reflection

What areas do you think you have performed well?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

What areas do you think you could improve?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

What is your plan moving forward?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

Comments and Feedback	
Educator/Reviewer	RUSON

RUSON signature:		Date:
Reviewer signature:		

APPRAISAL TOOL



Performance Review and Development Plan for the
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Personal Details

Name:

Date:

Position Title: RUSON

Reviewer's Name & Designation:

Ward:

Summative Appraisal Reflection

What areas do you think you have performed well?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

What areas do you think you could improve?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

What is your plan moving forward?

RUSON

Educator/Reviewer

Comments and Feedback	
Educator/Reviewer	RUSON

RUSON signature:		Date:
Reviewer signature:		