



Student Placement Case Study – Erin O'Driscoll, Slateford Road Medical Centre

“Placement allows you to meet an excellent network of professionals who have a wealth of knowledge and experience.”

Erin O'Driscoll - BA Adult Nursing

Please tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Erin, and I am a 3rd Year Adult Health student nurse at Edinburgh Napier University. I love my role as a student nurse, and it is a privilege to be able to help others. I have had an excellent three years at ENU, and I am sad my time here is coming to an end. I have a keen passion for Tissue Viability, and I have secured a place in a full-time master's program in Tissue Viability starting in September 2022, which I am really looking forward to. In my spare time, I walk friends and neighbour's dogs, and enjoy water sports, walking, and going to the cinema.

What was the opportunity you were involved with?

I had the opportunity to complete my community placement with the team at Slateford Road Medical Centre. This was an outstanding placement, and I cannot commend the staff any more than I have. The team was so welcoming, friendly and involved me in every learning opportunity possible. Each staff member was so informative, spared no detail in providing me with information regarding common illnesses and diseases we encountered, and provided me with many resources to further my learning. They assisted massively in my development as a student nurse and boosted my confidence. They allowed me to be as independent as possible within my limitations, which contributed massively to my competency as a student nurse.

What did your role entail?

The role of the Community Staff and District Nurses is very broad and involved a multitude of disciplines, including diabetic care, insulin administration, diabetic wound dressings, healthy living advice, and much more. We did various callouts for bladder and bowel support. What I thoroughly enjoyed was not only were we nurses, but we were friendly faces and provided vital companionship for patients suffering from loneliness; we may be their only contact from one day to the next, and seeing their smiles was so rewarding. We also provided advice on healthy eating, smoking cessation, weight, and general support for patients who are struggling in the community.

What key skills did your placement teach you?

This placement not only taught me essential clinical skills but various professional and life skills. Due to the opportunities available, I managed to improve my catheter insertion skills and became very confident in wound dressings. This placement increased my knowledge of various medications used for different illnesses and diseases and allowed me to read up further on them. I gained a massive appreciation for end-of-life care, and how important it is to just simply provide compassion and dignity to patients who are at the end of their journey. Being involved in palliative care was so sad, but rewarding, knowing you made a great effort to make a patient and their family as comfortable and supported as possible. Being a friendly and empathic face for families and patients in such a difficult period of their life, was so important. I was taught vital time management skills, as this was very important in order to complete all visits and notes in a timely manner for the day. Organisation is key and I became skilled with creating lists of what was required to be done.



“Completing a placement has a massive benefit to you on a personal and professional level. Theory work is excellent, but it is vital you put your theory work into practice.”

Erin O'Driscoll - BA Adult Nursing

Did you face any challenges during your time on placement?

Occasionally I found palliative care challenging, as it was such a sad time for both families and the patient. Sometimes it was difficult to find the words to comfort and reassure them, but I remained professional and supportive, providing person-centred and evidence-based advice if required, and amplified the support available for them.

What were the highlights and key successes of your time on placement?

Every aspect of this placement was a highlight; however, the main highlight was watching a patient's journey through our care become successful, and safely discharging them knowing they are safe, healthy, and content, reassuring them if they had any issues, we were only a phone call away. It was so satisfying to watch their wounds go from complex to healed.



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How do you feel your studies at Edinburgh Napier University prepare you for this placement?

My time at Edinburgh Napier University has been fundamental in preparation for this placement. Each module, tutorial, and clinical skills class has provided me with the educational resources and knowledge of evidence-based practice to be able to perform my duties to the best of my ability. Each tutor and lecturer has been very supportive and excellent with guiding us to reading lists, documents & literature. Reflection with my PDT allowed me to discuss my experiences and express my feelings, which contributed to my development on a personal and professional.

Do you think your experience from placement has affected your future career plans?

This placement contributed massively to reassuring my passion for preventing and treating wounds, thus nudging me on to apply for my Masters in Tissue Viability. It allowed me to realise how important the skin is, as it is the largest organ in our body, and the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to the healthy maintenance of it, therefore guiding me to choose the future career I would like to pursue as a staff nurse.

What advice would you give to someone considering doing a placement at university?

Relax, breathe, and most of all, enjoy! Bring all the enthusiasm and willingness to learn with you, and that will carry you a long way forward. It is a nerve-wracking time, and nobody expects you to know everything. Read up on the placement prior, the common illnesses that are seen on this placement, and the types of investigations medical staff may carry out. Pack a bag with the essentials, such as notebooks, pens, deodorant, and filling lunch. Ensure you practice self-care, and take time out when you need to, your mental health is massively important.