



Trinity College Dublin Students' Union
House 6,
Trinity College Dublin,
Dublin 2.

TCDSU Statement on Students Clinical Placements

TCDSU is incredibly disappointed by the Department of Health's sudden decision to remove first, second and third year student nurses and midwives from placement on Saturday night without providing clarity on the possible consequences and outcomes that these students are now facing.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, student nurses and midwives have remained an afterthought by our Government and have been excluded from conversations that directly impact their education and their future. **Students need to be consulted and included in these vital discussions and cannot continue to be kept in the dark by decision-making bodies. This has to change.**

These students on placement pay upwards of €3,000 a year to work for free in hospitals across the country. They have now been placed in a position, against their will, where many are concerned they will not reach their learning outcomes, or registration requirements. From the very beginning, students on placement have been at the frontline of this pandemic. Pulling students from placement at this late stage, without raising awareness of any contingency plans is unacceptable. Now, an already overstretched healthcare system is facing the losses of over 2,000 nursing and midwifery students on placement at this crucial time. Anyone who believes these students on placement do not pull their weight as a vital member of the healthcare team, is terribly mistaken.

Internship students who are in their final year, continue to provide crucial support on the frontline throughout this pandemic as rostered staff members and deserve the same fair wage that was offered to their colleagues last year.

Continually, TCDSU, the Union of Students Ireland and the INMO have been flagging issues faced by students on placement this past year. Students were pulled from placement "as there will be no educational and support infrastructure for them while in the clinical learning environment". This has been true since last March. Over the past 10 months, many placement students have had to sacrifice their learning outcomes to provide crucial support on understaffed and overwhelmed wards across the country. **Clear contingency measures are vital to ensuring that students can meet their learning outcomes and progress and graduate as scheduled. The lack of transparency around this is actively stifling the education of thousands of students.**

Tuesday, 19th January, 2021 (19/01/21)



Back in 2018, 95% of nurses and midwives in Ireland voted in favour of an INMO strike to flag the chronic and unsafe understaffing. This call for help and support fell on deaf ears and we are now yet again, paying for the consequences of the inaction of our government.

The chronically understaffed healthcare system is often propped up by those students on placement. How can we expect our already under pressure healthcare system to adapt to this very sudden change while working at the coalface of the pandemic?

Medicine students have also been asked to volunteer for the opportunity to participate in proning teams in a University hospital. The HSE is blatantly exploiting these students, to gain hands-on experience, without any form of remuneration. These students are risking their lives on the front lines and for what? It is unacceptable for a Health Service to be relying on the good will and voluntary time of students while those very students continue to be neglected.

TCDSU is continually working with the Dean of Health Sciences, the Counselling service and are in the process of ensuring there are further resources and supports available. We will also be sending a letter to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly.

If you need help, please reach out to the relevant resources or Leah welfare@tcdsu.org or Megan education@tcdsu.org

Kind Regards,

Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Eoin Hand, President
Megan O'Connor, Education Officer
Leah Keogh, Welfare and Equality Officer
Philly Holmes, Communications and Marketing Officer
Hugh McNerney, Ents Officer