



College and careers



Dean Flanagan welcomes new nursing and midwifery students and offers some advice to those who are set to graduate

MY NAME is Dean Flanagan and I am the student and new graduate officer with the INMO. I am the link member of staff between the students, new graduates and the INMO. I would like to welcome you into the nursing and midwifery professions, and I hope you find it as thrilling and rewarding as I did when I first became a nurse. I will be visiting all 13 colleges in the hopes of meeting you all and taking any questions you may have.

Student reps

When travelling to the various campuses around Ireland, I will be offering free INMO membership to students for the duration of your training, and I will also be looking for student representatives. A student 'rep' is a member of the INMO who acts as a link between the INMO and the students at your college. Reps make sure students get the most out of their studies while simultaneously getting the best support in their own training.

As a rep you will:

- Be the first to find out about local policy issues and what's happening across the entire nursing field, helping you to stand out to employers when applying for your first nursing post
- Be the first to know about upcoming events and training days
- Become better connected with the professions and the INMO
- Build a network of peers, gain leadership skills, and improve your CV.

The benefits to other students include:

- Having their best interests looked after
- Finding out about student events
- Having reassurance that equality and

diversity guidance is being followed in the workplace and everyone is being treated fairly

As a rep you would be visible to, and support, your fellow students throughout college and in their placements, by providing direction to the INMO's advice and services. The priority is making sure you become the best nurse you can, which means having enough time to spend on your studies. The INMO will not ask for more time than you're able to give.

Word of caution to all students

All of you will have received Garda clearance to be on your course and allow you to work with patients while on placement. While the start of college is a great time to let your hair down and celebrate, it's worth remembering that your actions can have an impact on your future. If you receive a caution from the Gardaí, for example, this will appear on your check as an admission of guilt. It's also important to be mindful of your activity on social networking sites. Remember that the comments you make and the photos you're tagged in can potentially be seen by course tutors and future employers. Therefore, be careful about the impression you're giving as this may work against the professional image you're keen to promote in the future.

Visit www.nmbi.ie for a link to social media guidelines for nurses and midwives.

European Nursing Student Association

The INMO is hosting the annual meeting of the European Nursing Student Association (ENSA), which will take place in Dublin, from October 21-26. The main goal of ENSA is to be a network between nursing students

in Europe and discuss matters regarding quality in nursing education.

The topics of this year's AGM include 'The importance of men in nursing' and 'ENSA – an organisation in the making'. If you are interested in attending, I would recommend that you register with ENSA on their Facebook Page www.facebook.com/ensanetwork, or alternatively do not hesitate to contact me at deanflanagan@inmo.ie if you would like to express your interest in attending this event. Any student can attend so please don't be shy.

New graduates

I know you can see some light at the end of the tunnel now, and the four years of difficult assignments and placements are behind you. It is important however to remember that the transition from an internship nurse to a staff nurse can be difficult for some people, in particular with current staffing levels, the graduate scheme and morale in the health service. That is why I am calling for all students and new graduates to ensure they become involved in a new national campaign entitled 'Patients First'. This campaign is the first step in achieving our objective of safe staffing levels, underpinned by agreed ratios in all areas of our health service.

You can all help by liking, linking and sharing the Twitter page @patientsfirstIE, the Facebook page www.facebook.com/PatientsFirstIE and the website www.patientsfirst.ie

Any improvement we can achieve through this campaign could ensure more of our new graduates are employed as staff nurses in the healthcare system.

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An exciting future awaits

Kate Finnamore offers some advice to first-year students on getting the most from college



CONGRATULATIONS! Enjoy this exciting time as you begin your nursing career. As a fourth-year I am also experiencing an exciting new beginning – the transition from nursing student to newly qualified staff nurse. When reflecting on my time as a nursing student over the past four years, I put together a few words of advice. Please read and consider the following carefully but, most of all, enjoy every minute of your time in college as the next four years will fly by.

Your first days of college will be exciting and the people you will meet in your course will be a diverse group. Over the next four years you will share classes, placements, laughs and tears. Don't underestimate the support your peers will provide to you. Respect your classmates and their views and remember there is learning in everyone's individual experiences.

When you start your placement, try not to be too nervous on your first few days. Try not to feel awkward in your uniform or on the ward, you earned your place on this

course and you deserve to be there. Ask questions and be enthusiastic as this will be recognised.

You may not be well received by every staff nurse you meet, brush it off, don't let them taint your views of nursing. Don't let this negativity affect the way you imagine your career for the coming years. Don't let other people's experiences negatively affect yours. If somebody had a tough placement on a ward, that does not necessarily mean you will have the same experience, as different clinical areas will suit different people. Try and leave your placement at the door when you go home at night, this may be difficult, some days more than others, but it is necessary.

You will find an area of nursing you love. Constantly remind yourself of why you came to nursing, especially on the tough days. It's okay to cry; this shows you really care. Enjoy humour at the appropriate moments during the day, it's important to be able to laugh. There will be times when a patient becomes upset, and you won't have the right words to console them but

just simply holding their hand and being there to listen is often enough.

Do not compare yourself to staff nurses on the ward, many of them have extensive experience, don't expect to be comparable to them after four years of college. Enjoy every minute of your training, one day very soon you will be qualified. Nursing will change you, you will experience life in a very real way during your training, and this will change many of your perspectives. You will meet some incredible people, colleagues, classmates, patients and everyone in between. Make the most of this experience, put yourself out there, make a difference no matter how big or small you feel your contribution is, patients will remember you, long after you've forgotten their names. Most of all, be true to yourself throughout your nursing career and become the nurse you aspire to be.

I wish you all the best of luck, and I look forward to meeting some of you on the wards.

Kate Finnamore is a fourth-year general nursing student in Dundalk IT and the student officer for the Drogheda Branch

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Labour Court

The INMO is waiting on a formal date for the Labour Court proceedings in relation to the ongoing issues for internship students. As this case began in July 2013 it is important to remember even though you may not be an internship student anymore the outcome of the proceedings may be of benefit to you. The issues once more are:

- Incremental credit for the 36-week internship
- Correction of pay during the post internship/pre-registration period

• The protection of reflective practice outside of rostered duty.

Please continue to show your support, and thank you to all those who took time out of their busy schedules during the year to attend the meetings and LRC hearings.

Top tips for a successful CV

Some of you may already have begun looking and applying for jobs, below are some quick tips to remember when typing up that all important CV:

- Make it logical, accurate and concise
- Tailor it to the job you're applying for

using key words for the target audience

- Include an opening statement that summarises your career history so far, plus achievements and personal qualities
- A short sentence about your career objective can be effective
- In the 'experience' section, describe your achievements, giving evidence of your competencies – don't be shy.

I hope your final placement flies by for you and as always please contact me on deanflanagan@inmo.ie if you have any queries or worries.