



# Warm welcome to first-year students

Roisin O'Connell welcomes incoming nursing and midwifery students and shares some advice from class reps

I WOULD like to extend a warm welcome to all the incoming first-year nursing and midwifery students joining the INMO. You are entering a very exciting time in your life. You have chosen a challenging yet extremely rewarding and valued profession, and the INMO is here to support you during both your training and your career as a nurse or midwife.

The role of the union is to promote the interests of our members. As a student member, you can contact the union for free information, advice, support and representation if you experience any issues while on placement. You can also access a variety of other services, such as our library and our professional development courses.

As your student and new graduate officer, I am here to answer any questions that you may have. No question is too big or too small. My most regularly asked questions refer to clinical placements and advice regarding students' rights and entitlements. You will receive email updates from me, including the *Student Link* E-zine, which will keep you up to date on any issues that may affect you.

If you would like to learn more about how the union works and how you can get involved as a representative for your class, please contact me. I wish you all the best on your journey to becoming a nurse or midwife. Welcome to the team.

**Ciarán Freeman, INMO student rep and chair of the INMO Student Section**

"To the new student nurses and midwives: firstly, congratulations for making it here; nursing is a very difficult course and it is not easy to get this far. There are so many things that I would like to say to encourage you. One of the most important pieces of advice that I can give is to always remember to take a step back. Especially when you are on placement. Placement can be very stressful especially when you combine that with assignments and a weekend job. Take a step back, try not to



*Pictured are (l-r): Melina Suvajeva, fourth-year midwifery; Riley Colson, second-year general nursing; Osamudiamen Oki-Osifo, third-year intellectual disability; Ryan Hayes, second-year general nursing; Elsie Cotterill, fourth-year midwifery; Dawn Zabel, third-year mental health*

compare yourself to other students and how they are progressing. Nursing is a different experience for each of us and we all progress at different rates.

"Lastly, always remember to look out for your fellow students. You will be paired with different peers throughout your placements and it is important that you have each other's back and offer support to one another. They will become your support network and you theirs. Placements can be extremely tough and it is important you have someone who you can share your experiences with. You are going to meet so many different people throughout your career and it all starts today. Best of luck!"

**Chelsea Farrell, third-year student midwife and INMO student rep**

"Congratulations and welcome to your nursing or midwifery programme. Thinking about it now, there are so many things that I would do differently if I could start my programme over again. One of the things I struggled with the most was keeping in mind that you are only a student. Don't expect yourself to know everything on the first day. You are there to learn, so take every opportunity available to you to

learn something new. If you get the opportunity to see a new procedure or take part in learning a new skill, go for it. Always ask questions; it is the best way to learn.

"If you don't understand why you are doing something, or if you are not comfortable doing it, don't do it. It is so important to know why you are doing something and even more important to be able to acknowledge that you don't know how to do something and are willing to learn.

"Lastly, try to build relationships with your lecturers. College can be a very stressful time for students. Building relationships with your lecturers ensures that if you are struggling with an assignment or finding it difficult to understand or grasp a certain topic, you can go to them for help. We all need help from time to time and reaching out early is always the best option. The same goes for when you are completing assignments – try not to leave them until the last minute. Start your assignments early and leave yourself loads of time to work on them.

*Roisin O'Connell is the INMO's student and new graduate officer. If you have a question for her, please email roisin.oconnell@inmo.ie*