



Why are Registered Nurse or Allied Health Professional Apprentices Supernumerary?

All Apprentices must have an [apprenticeship agreement](#). This sets out how long you'll employ them for, the training you'll give them, their working conditions, the qualifications they are working towards. The apprentice agreement covers all the hours they are employed and undertaking the training (both on and off the job) toward the competence in the named occupation. In the case of healthcare professional programmes such as nursing and allied health professions, the position can be slightly confusing because during the 'training' which includes the practice placements the apprentices must be supernumerary. This effectively means that when the individual is undertaking any practice learning hours as part of their apprenticeship agreement they must be supernumerary. Both the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) provide guidance on this matter:

For Nurses the NMC state:

"Programme providers must ensure that students are supernumerary during all practice learning. Supernumerary means that the student will not, as part of their programme of preparation, be contracted by any person or body to provide nursing care". (NMC 2010)

For Allied Health Professional the guidance from HCPC is as follows:

Although the term supernumerary is not specifically used within HCPC guidance due to the nature of AHP placements, however the HCPC standards for education and training specify: "There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting" (HCPC 2009 5.2) and "the practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment" (HCPC 2009 5.3). This ensures that learning, teaching and supervision are designed to encourage "safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct" (HCPC 2009 5.4). By implication, AHP students are therefore extra to the established workforce in a specific placement location.

If an employer wishes to employ the apprentice nurse or AHP part time in some other role these hours are not supernumerary. However, these hours would be outside of the apprenticeship agreement and require a separate contract of employment e.g. as a Senior Healthcare Support Worker. These hours would not be counted toward practice learning hours required for programme (apprenticeship) completion.