

Nursing at Queen's University

From beginning my Nursing degree at Queen's in September 2017, the 'Nursing Profession' in my eyes and how I view it has changed completely. To each individual, to become a nurse they associate it with the long hours, numerous patients, travelling and everything else that comes with it but from having first-hand experience on wards and in the community, to me it is so much more. It is the 15 minute conversations you have with someone who lives alone and you are possibly the only individual they see all day; it is the smile you see on a patient's face when you assist them with something they could normally do themselves but now require help; and the small words of thanks given to you by those around you. Yes, the hours are long, the work is demanding both physically and mentally but I wouldn't have it any other way.

University is a huge step up. It requires commitment, dedication, hard work and time keeping skills, but on the other hand it is a place to meet new people and to grow as a person into your chosen career path. For me, Nursing was a struggle to begin with, it took me a few weeks to actually find my feet and build the confidence I needed to succeed. The university is very accommodating and staff are always there to guide you in the right direction no matter what your issue may be.

Placement, well where to start with that. I can remember my first day of placement as vividly as if it were yesterday. My hands were shaking and my heart pounding, and my mouth so dry I couldn't even introduce myself to the nurse when I arrived. However, when I was introduced to the staff and having my first encounter with a patient as a student nurse, everything began to fall into place. All the academic work which had been done prior to placement now made sense and I felt relaxed, having actually to communicate with an individual/patient, rather than with my classmates or a simulation.

I would love to be able to say that each day of university and especially placement is great and nothing ever goes wrong, but then I would truly be lying. It is tough, it was a whole new experience for me but one that I am so thankful I have been given the opportunity to work on.

As a student nurse there is a level of responsibility that you hold while on clinical placement but it is one which I have used to my advantage. Nurses are busy, (very busy) individuals and in each of my placements my mentors have shown and taught me things which I will take with me throughout my career, however, I find that as a student we have that little bit of 'free time' in which we can spend with the patients. I have found that many people just want someone to talk to so that is one of the things I strive to do within each placement. Not to treat them as a 'patient' but as an individual who may not like being in the situation they are in, but knowing that they have someone to talk to when they need to can be a great support mechanism.

I have laughed, I have cried, I have learnt things that I will take with me for the duration of my career, and as I am now ready to start my 3rd year of Adult Nursing, I look forward as to what challenges and obstacles I may face in the next year, but feel glad that I have chosen Queen's University as the place for it all to be carried out at. The skills and knowledge I have built upon over the past 2 years have helped me in so many ways, and going into my final year is quite daunting to say the least, but I am looking forward to what is to come.

What I will say for anyone starting or thinking about Nursing is that your physical and mental health is just as important as your patients so look after yourself too. Make the most out of each day, take everything in and trust me it will only be a blink until you are in my position about to begin and take on final year.

Also.... One last tip, buy a decent pair of comfy shoes, trust me you will need them

Aimee- Year 2 Student Nurse