Enabling revalidation for registrants working in an education setting

When revalidation was introduced by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in April 2016, much of the guidance and information focused on nurses and midwives employed in a variety of roles. Defining their practice area as ‘education’, nurses and midwives employed by the university attended interactive workshops to support their revalidation submission. Working with the human resources department, registrants were identified. In total, 11 workshops were delivered to those intending to revalidate, one of which was for confirmers. Over 80% of registrants employed by the university attended a workshop. The project revealed the challenges and the potential of combining educational and professional identities in a university context, with revalidation having a positive effect on the identity of nurses and midwives working in an education setting.

Author: Julie Attenborough is associate dean and director of undergraduate studies, School of Health Sciences, City, University of London.

Abstract: This collaborative project at City, University of London, aimed to support the revalidation of nurses and midwives employed in a variety of roles. Defining their practice area as ‘education’, nurses and midwives employed by the university attended interactive workshops to support their revalidation submission. Working with the human resources department, registrants were identified. In total, 11 workshops were delivered to those intending to revalidate, one of which was for confirmers. Over 80% of registrants employed by the university attended a workshop. The project revealed the challenges and the potential of combining educational and professional identities in a university context, with revalidation having a positive effect on the identity of nurses and midwives working in an education setting.

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Training and support
While we recognised that revalidation is fundamentally the responsibility of registrants, we wanted to support them in the university to revalidate. Critical to the success of providing such support was institutional buy-in by the university as an employer of registrants. By approaching human resources at an early stage we were able to access increased HR resources for the first year of the project.

Our first step was to identify all registrants in the university and contact them to raise awareness about revalidation and the code; 72 were identified. We encouraged all of them to register online with the NMC and organised a series of workshops for confirmers and registrants, which covered the requirements, reflective account writing, feedback and documentation. We produced a folder for use by all registrants containing materials about revalidation, and also developed an online quiz to test knowledge about revalidation. The quiz was popular: 48 registrants completed it, and it has subsequently been adapted for use with second-registration students.

We set up an intranet page through HR, which had links to the NMC guidance, provided details of workshops and sources of support, and identified revalidation leads across the university to support staff. We also identified people who were suggested confirmers for registrants; where possible, these were line managers.

Crucial to the success of the project was the identification of revalidation leads across the nursing and midwifery disciplines. They attended an initial workshop and were able to advise and support staff preparing for revalidation.

Workshops
There were 11 workshops, one of which was specifically for confirmers, and all the workshops were well attended. In total, 63 registrants took part, which was 87% of those employed by the university.

Seven registrants attended the workshop for confirmers, which explored the purpose of revalidation, the role of the confirmers, and provided guidance on examining evidence, acting honestly and in good faith, and information about the code.

Addressing this in a supportive and collaborative way, using scenarios, enabled confirmers to explore their anxieties about the role and become familiar with the materials provided by the NMC. Registrants were universally positive in their evaluation: they thought the workshops demystified the process, and they left with a sense of “being able to do it”. Staff raised some issues about their identities as both nurses and midwives and educators – and there was discussion about the positive role of revalidation in supporting their professional identities.

We were encouraged that staff considered the process of revalidation had raised the profile of nursing and midwifery at the university, and that they planned to develop this further through special interest groups. This was reinforced by feedback from staff who went on to revalidate in April 2016; it was especially encouraging that they considered the university had ‘bought into’ supporting them to retain their registration and helped raise the profile of the code.

One midwifery lecturer said: “...ultimately, this supports the embedding of the importance of public protection for this and future generations of nurses and midwives.”

This is, of course, part of the aim: “The Code will be central in the revalidation process as a focus for professional reflection. This will give the Code significance in your professional life, and raise its status and importance for employers” (NMC, 2015)

Future developments
Alignment with the university’s appraisal system was identified as an important area for development and this is being explored. Revalidation training is also now part of induction for new staff.

We have also embedded teaching about the code and revalidation in the pre-registration curricula, with bespoke workshops for midwifery students undertaking the shortened course.

Conclusion
Despite the anxieties and challenges, the introduction of NMC revalidation at City, University of London, has enabled registrants to feel pride in their identity as nurses and midwives. It has also raised the visibility and status of nursing and midwifery as part of the professional education profile of the university.

The process of identifying registrants across the university and supporting them to revalidate has also contributed towards building a stronger professional community within City, NT.