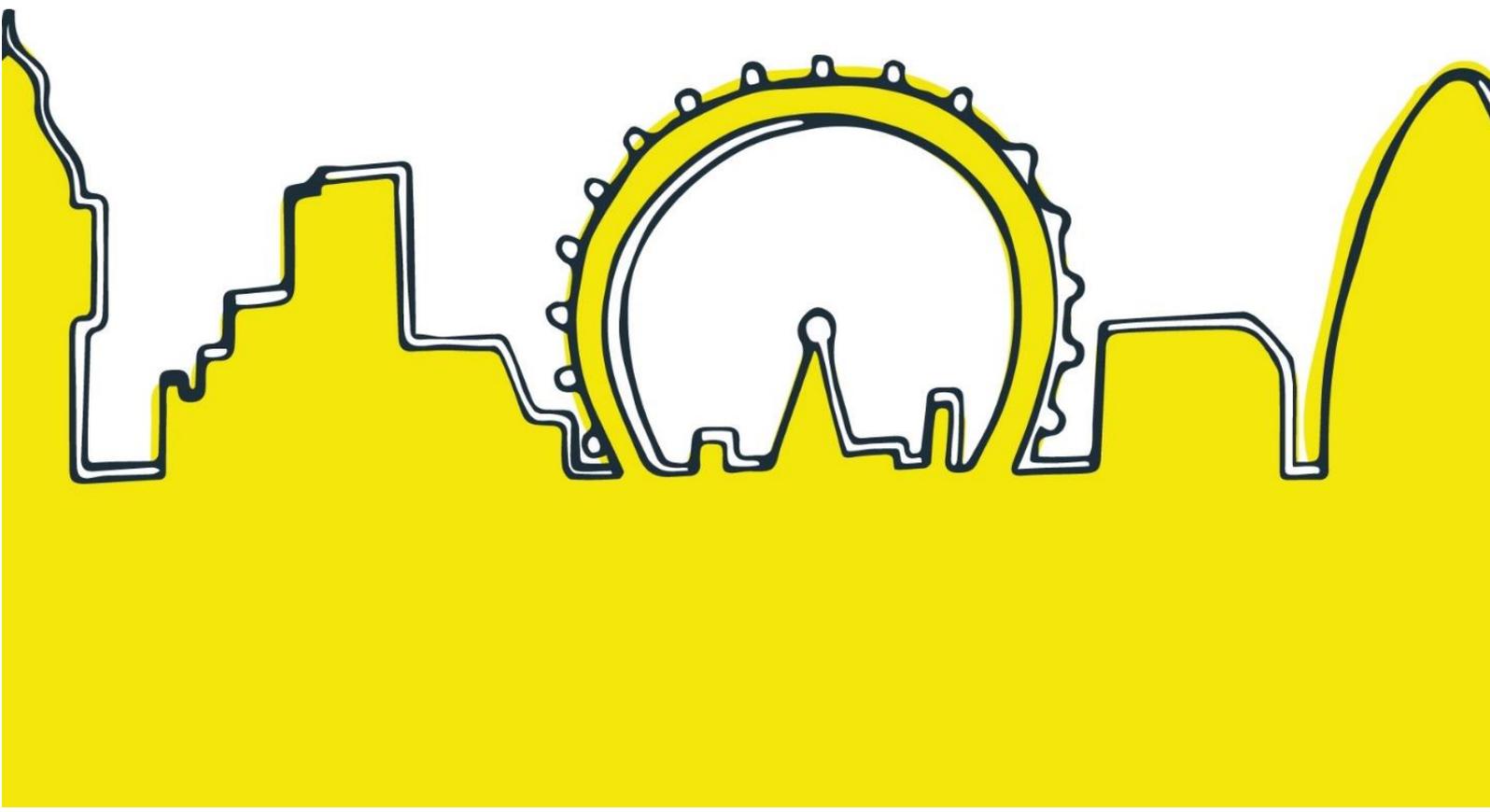


Capital Student Ambassador

A pan-London best practice guide for trusts
and Higher Education Institutes

August 2023





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Introduction

The best practice guide is a pan-London resource for health and social care organisations to support the process of recruiting Capital Student Ambassadors.

Student Ambassadors play a key role in achieving programme objectives, including:

- reducing attrition from pre-registration programmes for student nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (AHP)
- improving students' experiences.

In addition to this, if a student has consistently good placement experiences, they are more likely to want to remain with that organisation upon qualifying, therefore having a positive impact on an organisation's recruitment.

The approach has been developed through an extensive stakeholder engagement exercise involving practitioners and students from health and social care organisations across London.

This guide sets out key best practice principles for trusts and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to implement the Student Ambassador programme for student nurses, midwives and AHPs, either at the local or Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

Background

Student attrition from pre-registration clinical education programmes is a long-standing challenge in healthcare. The RePAIR project (2018), funded by Health Education England (HEE) and now part of NHS England, was designed to:

- establish a detailed understanding of the multi-factorial aspects of attrition and retention in pre-registration education and training and
- further identify approaches to reducing attrition and improving retention during and post-pre-registration training.

The CapitalNurse/ Midwife/ AHP Student Ambassador initiative has proven a huge success in the past by helping to build, review, and shape the CapitalNurse/ Midwife/ AHP work, for both the 'routes into nursing' and 'retention' workstreams.

It has given Student Ambassadors professional development opportunities in understanding system leadership and change management through collaborative working.

The role of a Student Ambassador

The Capital Student Ambassador Programme is a 12-month programme aimed at second and third-year students.

Capital Student Ambassadors are involved in various activities including:

- representing student groups and committees that inform the Capital programmes' work
- providing help and being involved in workshops, events and conferences
- reviewing and providing feedback on activities, plans and interventions designed to support student progress on their programmes.

Benefits of being a Capital Student Ambassador:

- Gain a wider understanding of NHS in London
- Involvement with project type activities
- Develop team working and leadership skills
- Demonstrate engagement and achievements that could enhance future job applications and career aspirations.

The role of a Student Ambassador Lead

To ensure successful implementation and maximum success of the programme, a Student Ambassador Lead should be assigned to lead the programme. Below are some examples of who can take on the Student Ambassador Lead:

- Trust Preceptorship Lead
- local HEI lead
- nursing/ Midwifery/ AHP Education Lead
- professional Development Nurses
- ICS Lead.

The Student Ambassador Lead will:

- lead on the recruitment of Student Ambassadors through facilitating webinars, disseminating the Expression of Interest (EOI) form, and reviewing submissions
- organise the schedule for the full programme and share this with the Student Ambassadors
- facilitate the launch of the programme and be the Student Ambassadors main point of contact throughout the programme
- issue certificates of participation to Student Ambassadors that completed the programme.

Recruitment

This section outlines the steps on how to recruit Capital Student Ambassadors.

The commencement of the Capital Student Ambassador programme will vary from one organisation to another and may depend on when the academic year starts. Below is an example timeline for recruiting Capital Student Ambassadors for an academic year starting in September.



Promoting the Student Ambassador programme – webinars

Webinars, held to gain interest from potential applicants, include the following topics:

- introduction to CapitalNurse/ Midwife/ AHP
- vision
- diversity and inclusion
- NHS People Plan, NHS Long Term Plan, London Vision.

It is recommended for webinars to be held 3 months prior to the commencement of the Capital Student Ambassador programme to allow sufficient time to promote, recruit, and enrol students to the programme.

Applying to the programme – Expressions of Interest (EOI)

The Student Ambassador programme can be promoted via:

- organisational newsletters
- HEIs communication channels
- as part of trust induction, during first placement.

EOIs are recommended to be disseminated following each webinar, ideally at least 2 months prior to the commencement of the Capital Student Ambassador programme. EOIs are collected using Microsoft Forms.

A template of the EOI form can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Managing applications

Following the deadline for the submission of EOIs, all entries will be collated and reviewed by the Student Ambassador Leads. All successful applicants will be contacted and sent the schedule for the year.

Launching your Student Ambassador programme

Launch event

Part of the schedule of the Capital Student Ambassador programme is its launch. The benefit of having a formal launch is for Student Ambassadors to meet each other and potentially discuss how they can support each other throughout the programme.

The Student Ambassadors can also share their contact details with each other and create a WhatsApp group chat which will act as another platform to share their learning and experience.

Opportunities

Opportunities identified from the Capital Student Ambassador programme are as follows:

- Student Ambassadors can support their peers and act as a link between the trust and the university to promote inclusion
- Being a Student Ambassador can count as a voluntary work experience which can be added to their curriculum vitae when applying for their first job post-registration
- Participation can give Student Ambassadors a strategic oversight of how trusts, HEIs, ICSs, and other organisations work together.

Challenges

Whilst opportunities have been identified through participation in the Capital Student Ambassador programme, challenges have also been identified:

- Attendance at meetings whilst on placement or attending university lectures
- Commitment to their engagement in the programme following recruitment
- Pressures of balancing the Student Ambassador role with university life and personal life.

Involvement

This section lists the scope of involvement by the Capital Student Ambassadors.

Regular meetings

It is recommended that Capital Student Ambassadors meet on a regular basis, ideally bimonthly.

Below are examples of the topics the meetings should cover:

- working styles
- multidisciplinary team (MDT) working
- interview preparation
- preceptorship.

It is also recommended that there is joint meeting among Student Ambassadors in Nursing, Midwifery, and AHP.

Project groups

The Student Ambassadors may be involved in different projects, such as:

- supporting the CapitalNurse/ Midwife/ AHP project initiatives and reviewing and providing feedback on activities, plans and interventions
- attending trust meetings relevant to their learning
- being a student voice.

Events

It is best practice to get Student Ambassadors involved in events. Some examples of these events are as follows:

- seminars in the trusts for students – Student Ambassadors could be involved to promote these and help with delivering
- student career fairs
- any relevant university fairs
- local HEI events
- CapitalNurse/ Midwife/ AHP events.

Recognition

Upon completion of the programme, Student Ambassadors are recognised for their invaluable contribution and participation.

Certificates

It is recommended that all Capital Student Ambassadors are provided with a certificate at the end of the programme which they can use for future job applications.

Evaluation

As with any process, it is best practice to evaluate its success. The Capital Student Ambassador programme evaluation was undertaken in June 2022 which included the topics and questions below.

1. Things to improve
2. Overview of the year

For each item, Student Ambassadors are asked to choose from the following: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Neutral

- Increased my confidence in communication
- Increased my understanding of the NHS in London
- Increased my understanding of other professionals
- Increased my confidence in public speaking

- Increased my understanding of working styles
- Increased my confidence in applying for jobs
- Improved my experience as a student in London
- Developed my team working skills
- Developed my leadership skills

3. Best bits

4. What would you say to other students about being an ambassador?

The outcome of the evaluation can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Useful websites/ resources

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Visit the NMC website for information on their standards for pre-registered nurses and midwives.

Part 1: [Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education](#)

Part 2: [Standards for student supervision and assessment](#)

Part 3: [Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes](#)

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Visit the [HCPC website](#) for further information and guidance on conduct and ethics for student AHPs.

General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)

Visit the [GOsC website](#) for further information and guidance about professional behaviours and fitness to practice for osteopathic students.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Capital Student Ambassador Expression of Interest Form

If you are interested in being a CapitalNurse/AHP/Midwife Student Ambassador, please complete the expression of interest form below by ***insert date here***. If you would like to discuss this further or require any support completing the form, please contact ***insert email address here***.

Name:

Email:

Ethnicity:

University you are studying at:

Interested in becoming a Student Ambassador for: (choose from the options below)

- CapitalNurse

- CapitalAHP
- CapitalMidwife

If CapitalNurse, which nursing profession: (choose from the options below)

- Adult Nursing
- Children and Young People Nursing
- Learning Disability Nursing
- Mental Health Nursing

If CapitalAHP, which AHP profession: (choose from the options below)

- Art Therapists
- Drama Therapists
- Music Therapists
- Chiropodists / Podiatrists
- Dietitians
- Occupational Therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Osteopaths
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Prosthetists and Orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and Language Therapists

Please write a short statement of no more than 250 words that demonstrates how your qualities and experience will help you fulfil your role as a Student Ambassador for CapitalNurse/AHP/Midwife. Your statement should address the following questions:

1. What is your experience in representing students, or others, working in groups or at meetings?
2. What will be able to contribute to the activities of Capital program?
3. What skills do you have that will be most important in the Student Ambassador role?

Appendix 2: Capital Student Ambassador evaluation

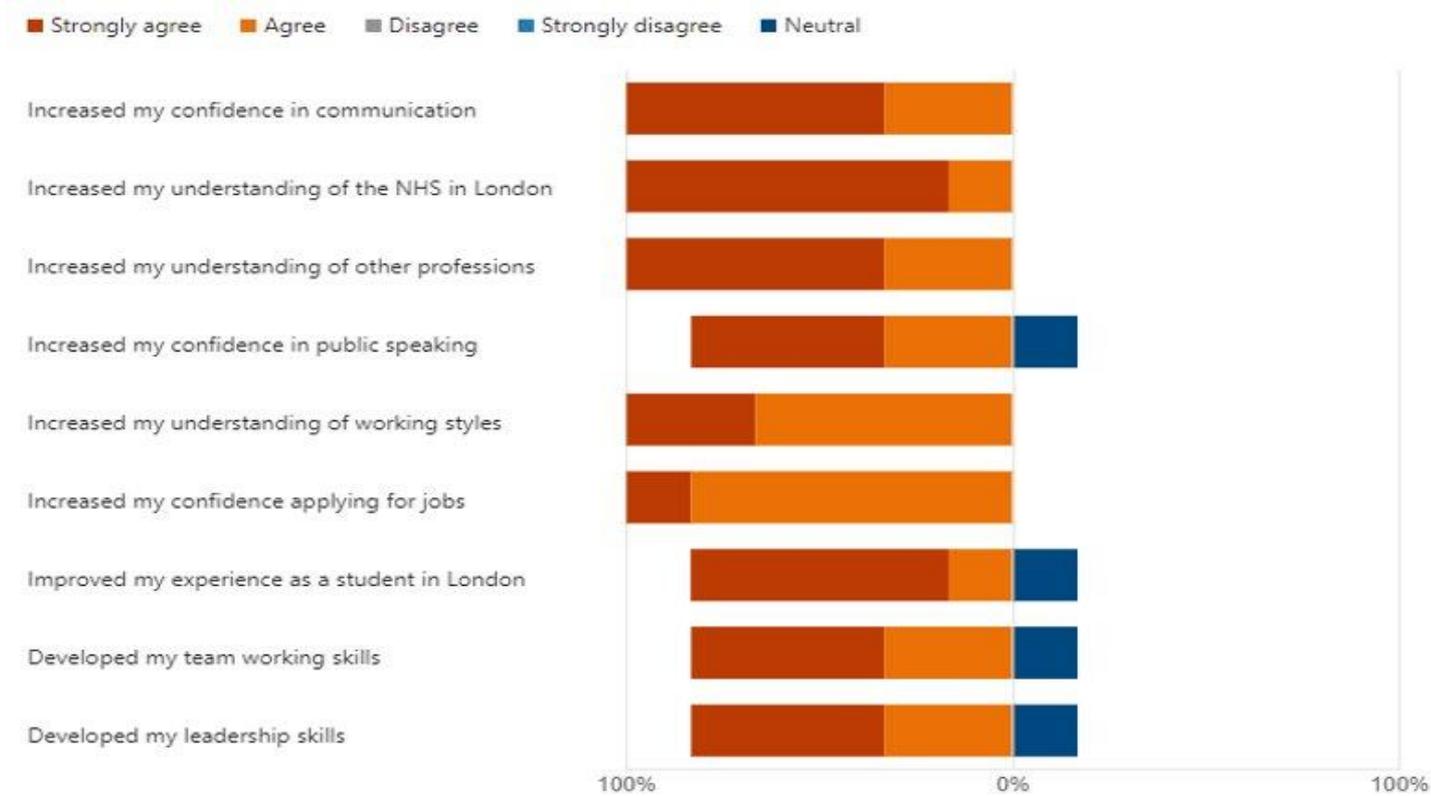
Things to improve

- “Hopefully, the meetings can be in the in-person format. (I understand it was hard for the last year.)”
- “I am eager to be more involved. If there are additional ways to participate, I think that would be great.”
- “Nothing needed to be done to bolster the experience, outstanding.”



- I would have loved a way to find knowledge on out of London job roles/preceptorships. I believe this would broaden the scope of expectations within an amazing team. “

Overview of the year



Best bits

- “It has been a great experience being a student ambassador. I have learnt a lot from the different programs offered and my confidence has increased a lot about my future career.”
- “Networking with other students and professionals. Gaining career advice.”
- “It was very enjoyable, and I hope to continue my involvement with the organisation. I learned a great deal from the different speakers and was able to take the information back to my student colleagues.”
- “The opportunity to absorb varying changes and developments in career and culture.”
- “The highlight for me has been in the presence of professionals who are willing to share their experiences with you in an open and honest way and keep you informed on how you can become the person you inspire to be. Learning about, preceptorship, working styles and interview preparation was the best for me.”

- “Taking up leadership roles and engaging with the school board.”
- “Having access to information directly from the programme leads. It is very helpful!”

What would you say to other students about being an ambassador?

- “Do it! Great way to get involved in your future career.”
- “Well worth the effort and learning potential.”
- “I would encourage you to join and volunteer for all opportunities. It’s a great way to gain insight to how your career in London will flourish and how to get the most out of every opportunity available.”
- “It will give you great confidence and provide you with skills to develop your communication, team working abilities, public speaking and real idea of the other healthcare professionals you will work with in the future.”
- “Go for it!”

Authors

- Dean Gimblett, Deputy International Recruitment Lead, CapitalNurse
- Joanna Tuazon, Community International Recruitment Lead, CapitalNurse

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