



Northumbria student nurse Gary Hall, who has been shortlisted for a Student Nursing Times award

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University shortlisted for two top nursing awards

Northumbria University has been shortlisted for two national awards by the Student Nursing Times magazine.

The annual Student Nursing Times Awards showcase and celebrate excellent performance from student nurses and in nurse education.

The University's specialist programme to [enable former nurses to return to work](#) has been shortlisted for the Return to Practice Course of the Year title,

while student Gary Hall from Crook, County Durham, is in line to win the new Student Innovation in Practice award.

Return to practice courses are an essential way of bringing former nurses and midwives back into the profession. Many take career breaks to look after their families and supporting them to return to work is especially important at a time when a significant proportion of staff are approaching retirement age.

Northumbria offers a part-time course to update skills and knowledge that fits around existing personal commitments. It also provides an access module that helps to boost students' confidence ahead of returning to study.

In 2016, the University enhanced its return to practice course by launching a pilot programme with local NHS trusts which offers students a salary for the time they spend working in clinical practice, rather than only receiving a traditional bursary.

Meanwhile, student nurse Gary Hall was nominated for his award by the Nursing Staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead, whilst on placement on Ward 23 - the hospital's elderly care ward.

The Student Innovation in Practice award seeks to recognise a student who has made an exceptional contribution to their placement by inspiring, leading or carrying out an innovative project that improves patient or service user care, experience or outcomes.

First year adult nursing student Gary has worked to improve care for patients, carers and service users by creating a vibrant information wall on the ward that promotes the advice and support services available to them. His display has generated positive feedback from carers who are now more aware of the support they can receive.

Senior lecturer Maggie Coates, who leads the Return to Practice course, said: "Northumbria University, Newcastle provides an outstanding part time Return to Practice (RTP) programme for students wishing to return to the professional register, for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals.

"Within a nurturing environment, the programme team recognise that each student has individual learning needs, transferable knowledge and skills, experience and talent. We recognise that RTP students are unique with a wealth of experience, knowledge and insight into professional practice.

"Facilitating students to think critically, reflect and consider their own and other's practice is paramount. The programme team work hard to ensure that students really feel as though they can achieve their goal of returning to the register."

Prof. Alison Machin, Head of Northumbria's Department of Nursing,

Midwifery and Health, said: “As the principal provider of nurse education in the North East of England, we play an essential role in not only training new nurses and midwives, but also in supporting their continual professional development and refreshing their skills to meet changing NHS needs and guidelines. We are especially pleased to see that our work in supporting former staff returning to work in the sector has been recognised in our shortlisting for the Return to Practice course of the year.

“We are also delighted to see Gary’s success in his award nomination. His academic and placement tutors have been hugely impressed with his attitude during his first year of study and we wish him all the best as he goes through to the finals.”

Ami Jackson, Practice Placement Facilitator at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, added: “Gary took the lead on developing a carers information board to help provide information, advice and support to our relatives and carers. His use of innovative ways to promote awareness of carers needs encapsulates our Trust’s strategic priorities and it has also enriched the existing positive culture throughout the ward.”

Student Gary Hall added: “Whilst on placement, I gained the ward support to put my theoretical knowledge into practice to support carers. The information board looked at different charities and organisations that supported carers and their loved ones, at the time of need.

“Putting the information together and supplying carers with contacts had a positive outcome on their wellbeing as they started to come forward wanting help and guidance. Relatives and service users are at the heart of everything we do, as healthcare professionals and by presenting this information in practice, we as nurses can achieve greater outcomes to support carers through difficult times.”

The winners will be announced on Thursday 26 April at a ceremony in London.

For more information on the courses offered by Northumbria’s Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/nursingmidwiferyhealth

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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