

# Nursing Student Honoured for Outstanding Caring Skills



A nursing student who honed his talents while working with prisoners and drug addicts has been honoured for his outstanding caring skills.

Simon Hunter, 33, who graduated from Edinburgh Napier yesterday with a BN in Nursing with distinction, has been named this year's winner of the university's Simon Pullin Award.

Simon caught the judges' eye with a written submission about his experience of compassionate caring during placements at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and HMP Edinburgh.

He drew inspiration from a mentor at the hospital who struck up a positive rapport with a long-term drug user on a respiratory ward.

Simon was "genuinely moved" by the sincerity with which the nurse approached his task and his efforts to ease the patient's concerns, and by the patient's candid response to the nurse's sympathetic manner.

He said: *"It was this experience that led me to question my own judgements and values, and inspired me to explore the kind of nursing that would challenge me to show compassion to those patients who have perhaps historically felt none."*

He built on this experience during a 'challenging' four-week placement with the prison service, concluding: *"I learned more about compassion from the patients unused to it."*

*"Just as the lifelong smoker with terminal lung cancer or the obese patient with diabetes do not need their choices*

*condemned at the bedside, neither does the drug addict or convicted sex offender need their history overshadowing their care requirements or clouding the practice of those charged with delivering them.*

*“They are suffering. They need help. It is our skills, our experience and, of course, our compassion that are needed.”*

Simon, who is originally from Dunfermline but has lived in Edinburgh since he was 19, will take up a post in the Acute Medical Unit at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh following his graduation at the city’s Usher Hall.

He is already aware nursing is a demanding job and that the rewards are not always evident.

He said: *“Nursing care means more than salves and stitches. It requires commitment, graft and skill but if you can bring these things to the table along with your compassion and empathy, you could have an extremely satisfying career ahead of you.”*

The Simon Pullin Award, which comes with £250 in prize money, was established by Edinburgh Napier to recognise the human side of nursing and midwifery. The honour was created in memory of Senior Nurse Simon Pullin, who played a key role in the university’s Compassionate Care Programme up until his death from cancer in July 2011.

Dr Stephen Smith, who is a senior lecturer at the university and a nurse consultant in compassionate care with NHS Lothian, said Simon was a very worthy winner of this year’s award.

He said: *“How we care when our values are challenged is probably one of the most difficult things we have to do. In his account of his experiences, Simon demonstrated how important it is that we try to find a way to do so.”*