Students buy essays as they can’t afford to fail

Nursing has changed almost beyond recognition in the past 50 years. While nurses are still expected to have a hands-on approach, they often take on duties that were once carried out by doctors, such as writing prescriptions or providing specialist care for conditions including heart disease and diabetes. As a result, training programmes have become more sophisticated, and many more nurses now hold a degree.

Some degree courses have come under fire for being ‘too academic’. In 2010, the then prime minister David Cameron said that training should be more relevant to the daily work nurses undertake on the wards.

It seems that the academic burden is proving too much for some nursing students, who have been accessing essay-writing support from companies such as ours. Certainly it is not surprising when you consider the hours nursing students work while on placements, and the requirement to attend lectures and seminars, study for exams, and complete assignments. It is no wonder they cannot fully dedicate their time to writing thousands of words on something more theoretical.

Last year, we provided 659 nursing essays; nursing is currently the fourth most accessed subject at UK Essays. This summer, The Times reported that 1,700 nursing students had been disciplined for cheating, with some of them submitting essays written by companies such as ours.

Time pressures

While we robustly encourage students to use our essays as a starting point for further research, and promote a fair use policy, it is clear that there are some who are driven to handing in work that is not their own because of time pressures or a lack of writing support.

In our experience, the cost of university tuition fees can be a major factor in people seeking essay-writing help. This is usually because they simply cannot afford to fail a module or repeat the year.

In July, the government announced that bursaries for nursing students would be replaced by loans. With this fear of debt hanging over them, and the ongoing pressures faced by nursing students, I fully expect many more to access our services.

It is, of course, worrying that in a profession where lives are at risk, so many students feel compelled to buy essays. However, I believe this trend is symptomatic of a wider problem, namely that some of our trainee nurses do not feel adequately supported by universities.

We rely on nurses to safeguard our health, and that of our loved ones, but many hospitals are facing shortages and this can have a devastating effect on care.

While there is a need for a rigorous assessment process, it is clear that some struggle with the academic task of writing, or simply do not have the time to fit it in around their placement work.

Ultimately, universities must do all they can to encourage the right people to go into nursing. This means providing the support they need to succeed, whether that involves additional support from tutors or a shift towards more practical examinations.