come back
...to nursing

Sharon Gray qualified as a nurse in 2002 and worked as a staff nurse in A&E, then becoming a college nurse when she needed a 9-5 work pattern to fit around family life.

However, in 2010 Sharon left nursing all together.

"I had a knee operation which took a long time to recover from and decided to take a break and enjoy time with my children, but always knew that I would return to nursing and so three years later I started searching the internet to see what I needed to do. I discovered the Return to Practice (RtP) programme in the prospectus for the University of Northampton. I had a very informal meeting with the course facilitator, completed the application form and was delighted to begin the programme a couple of months later.

As I had only been out of nursing for a few years I needed to complete a three-month course of study and experience. I didn't find the study difficult but the practical experience back in the A&E department at Northampton General Hospital was tough - a lot of the systems and processes had changed, the department was a lot busier and I had to learn to work at a much faster pace.

The most challenging element was working with former colleagues again; I was worried they would expect me to pick up from where I had left off seven years previously!! But actually, it is great to be back working as part of a team again, I realised how much I had missed the camaraderie.

I find that hospitals are a lot busier now with our aging population and the strict targets can make a busy department stressful. However, essentially nursing in itself has not changed and I feel I am a lot more confident and my life experience enables me to be a more proficient nurse.

I would definitely recommend the RtP course, all the skills you learn during your training come flooding back and I thoroughly enjoyed it."

Two years after completing the RtP course, Sharon is now a Sister within the A&E department.

Sharon returned to nursing. *You can too.*
Begin your return journey at: *comeback.hee.nhs.uk*