

Training nurses, midwives and nursing associates: The student voice



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Our role in educating student nurses, midwives and nursing associates

We're the independent regulator for the 690,000 nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England.

Better and safer care for people is at the heart of what we do, supporting the healthcare professionals on our register to deliver the highest standards of care.

We make sure nurses, midwives and nursing associates have the skills they need to care for people safely, with integrity, expertise, respect and compassion, from the moment they step into their first job.

How nurses, midwives and nursing associates are trained

Nurses and midwives need a degree to practise, and this reflects how complex and responsible their roles are. Nursing associates require a foundation degree.

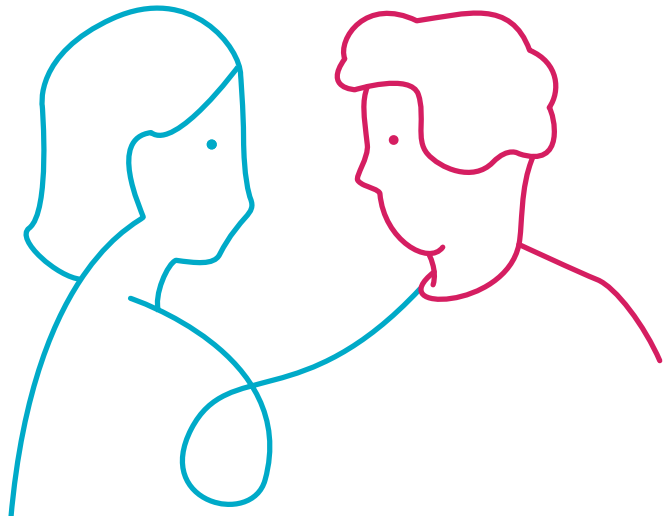
We approve education institutions to deliver nursing, midwifery and nursing associate programmes. We currently accredit around 900 programmes in over 80 education institutions across the UK and maintain a database of all approved courses. Approved education institutions recruit students and train them against our standards, assessing whether they are suitable for careers in nursing and midwifery. Students spend half their time in the classroom and half in healthcare settings, where they can gain real experience of caring for patients and service users.

Learning to provide good care

Staff in education institutions and healthcare settings make sure that as students you are safe when caring for patients and service users, and that they mentor and supervise you on your placements. As you learn, you must have access to different areas where care takes place as this helps you progress and qualify. Above all, student nurses, midwives and nursing associates must demonstrate the right values and behaviours and be compassionate and respectful.

Joining the register

When you've successfully completed your programme, your education institution will let us know whether you have met the education and practice standards and are of good health and good character. If you're considered fit to practise you'll then be eligible to apply to join our register. Registration entitles you to practise in the UK. Each year we receive over 22,000 newly qualified nurses and midwives from education institutions.



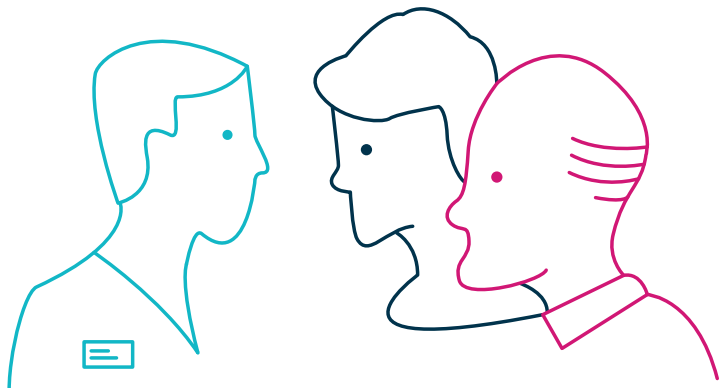
How students shape education

We've recently published our new standards that education institutions have to meet and students' views played an important part in their development. Students' views are also taken into account when education programmes are being developed. We check that this happens before we approve the programme. We also require ongoing evidence of feedback from students when we monitor the quality of education.

We've developed a number of questions that students might be asked as part of our quality assurance activity:

Joining your course

- How was your experience of applying for your course?
- Were service users, patients and carers involved in interviewing and selection?
- What was your experience of recognition of prior learning?
Were you made aware prior learning can be taken into account?
Were you supported by your employers in considering this process?
- Can you tell us what the entry requirements were for programme?
How and when were you informed of those requirements?
- What support were you given by employers to apply to your programme, if applicable?



Supervision and assessment (general)

- Can you name your practice assessor and academic assessor?
How accessible are they?
- How aware are you of the Standards for student supervision and assessment being used in the programme?
- How is support, supervision, learning and assessment provided to you?
- In your view do your practice placements comply with NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment?
- What do you think of the way in which practice supervisors and assessors make observations and decisions about your performance and give feedback?
- How often are you assessed? Is it mapped to the appropriate point in the curricula?
- Do you think there was a clear balance between the level of supervision that was provided and the stage of the programme?
Did the level of supervision you were provided with reflect your learning needs and the stage of learning?
- Do you understand how and why practice and academic assessors might raise concerns about your conduct, proficiency and achievement when on the programme?
- Do your supervisors confirm that proficiencies have been met by the end of their programme?
- Do your practice assessors and academic assessors communicate and collaborate at relevant points in the programme structure and student progression?

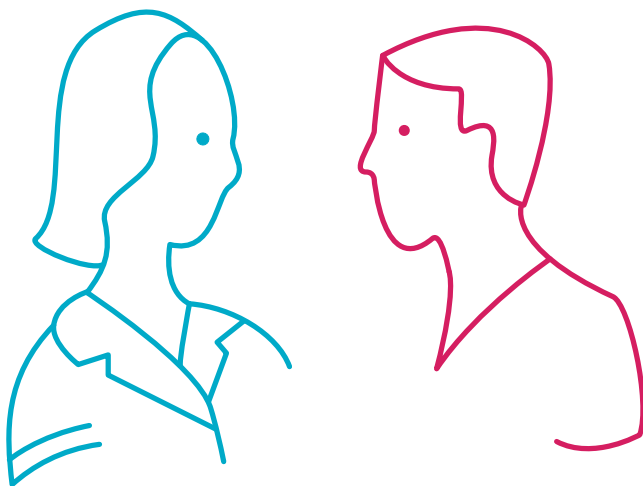
Practice supervision

- Did your practice supervisors demonstrate a level of confidence in their role?
- Are you aware that practice supervisors need to ensure a safe and effective learning experience?
- Does practice supervision enhance and support independent learning?
- Were the supervisors who supported you all registered health and social care professionals, and did they have expertise relevant for the areas of education they were providing?
- Did you feel that the practice supervisor who supported you was given enough training and preparation to fulfil their role?
- Do your practice supervisors record their observations, and the relevant observations of others, in your record of achievement?
- Are practice supervisors appropriately experienced and qualified to provide the necessary support during placements?

Practice assessment

- Have you been assigned a practice assessor? Have you got one practice assessor for a placement or a series of placements? How were you made aware of who this individual is?
- What methods are used to assess your practice?
- Are your practice assessors prepared and supported well for their role as practice assessors in advance of working with students?
- Do your practice assessors proactively develop their professional practice and knowledge in order to fulfil their role as practice assessors in advance of working with students?
- Did you feel your practice assessor had an understanding of your proficiencies and programme outcomes?

- Do you believe that practice assessors maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing?
- What do you think of the way in which practice assessors conduct assessments to confirm student achievement of proficiencies and programme outcomes for practice learning?
- Are there sufficient opportunities in the programme for practice assessors to periodically observe you in order for decisions about assessment and progression to be made?
- Do your practice assessors demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical components of the programme?
- Have you ever been in a position where your practice assessor is also your practice supervisor or academic assessor?
- Has the assessor asked for feedback from a range of people you have been working with including users of services? What do you think of your assessments? Do you think more can be done to improve on the process or assessments?



Academic assessment

- Do you believe that academic assessors maintain current knowledge and expertise relevant for the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing and/or confirming?
- How do academic assessors use resources such as your student records to make decisions on conduct, proficiency and achievement or recommendations for progression?
- Do your academic assessors demonstrate an understanding of the practice components of the programme?

Learning

- How do you find the learning culture at your education institution and in the practice placements you have been in?
- How exposed to other professionals are you while working and learning? Is there documentary evidence of how interprofessional involvement is included in the programme? How is your engagement with this recorded? Do you find it useful?
- Are you given, and supported in, opportunities for research collaboration? Can you provide a specific example?
- In your view is your programme designed to meet the standards of proficiency and outcomes relevant to your programme?
- Tell me about your programme, does it comply with NMC programme standards specific to the programme being delivered?
- Do you feel that your learning time is protected, or are you supernumerary while learning in practice?
- Do you feel your educators act as role models, and can you provide an example?

- Are there sufficient learning opportunities to practice via simulation and during practice placements? What other teaching strategies are used?
- How do you feel about the structure of your programme? Does this allow you to manage your theory and learning experience effectively and reflect the stage of the programme you have reached?
- Are you able to apply your theoretical learning to practice? Are you able to relate knowledge and convert this to skills and procedures?
- How does your practice learning enable you to meet proficiencies and programme outcomes?
- Were the learning strategies sufficient to meet your needs? What reasonable adjustments were you provided with, if any?
- Do you feel that the learning delivered has helped you to achieve your proficiencies and programmes outcomes?



Personal development

- In what ways are you encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to critical self-reflection and safe practice? How is this recorded?
- What have you learned most by self-reflection? What have you changed as a result of self-reflection?
- Do you feel confident to raise mistakes and incidents you may be involved in?
- What does the duty of candour mean for you?
- Have you received any direct/indirect feedback from service users and families? What have you learnt from this?
- Are staff helpful to you in their interpersonal skill ability, their ability to provide constructive feedback, and in their assessment feedback?
- How often do you receive feedback? Is it helpful and what do you take from it?

Progression and achievement

- How are you assured that practice learning and supervision contributes to decisions around progress?
- Have you experienced practice assessors on this programme working in partnership with an academic assessor to evaluate and recommend students for progression for each part of the programme?
- Is your achievement equally balanced between theory and practice?
- What do you know about the Code, and how does it impact on your learning?

- Are there sufficient opportunities for the practice assessor to gather and coordinate feedback from practice supervisors, any other practice assessors and relevant people, in order to be assured about their decisions for assessment and progression in your programme?
- Can you explain what the health and character process means to you as a student and what it means to declare your status?

Placement

- What does seeking consent mean to you? How would you respond if someone did not consent to you caring for them?
- Who are your points of contact for the education institution and practice placement while you are at a placement? Do they share information or communicate about your learning?
- Have you undertaken an international practice experience, and if so what processes did you have to go through? Were you adequately supported in this learning experience, and if so how?
- Are you aware of any processes and checks conducted by your education institution to ensure the continued effectiveness and safety of your placements? Are there processes in place to manage risks? Can you tell us about them and provide a good example?
- Have you worked in different practice settings? How exposed have you been to different service users with a range of needs?
- What different types of communication have you used while on placements?

Resources

- Who leads the programme you are on?
- Was information about relevant local policies and processes relevant to the programme provided clearly and was it well signposted?
- Do you feel you have had access to sufficient resources, for example to ensure practice supervision is not compromised by staffing issues? How have any issues been responded to?
- Were learning support facilities satisfactory to meet your learning needs?
- How have you been made aware of the legal frameworks, such as EU legislation, within which your programme is run? Are you familiar with the governance arrangements?
- Have you been given information on what support is available should you have an interruption to your programme of study?
- What information have you been given about NMC registration? When you successfully complete all components of the programme are you aware of your responsibilities to record your professional award with the NMC?
- For all of your modules undertaken so far would you describe the induction to content, assessment, timetabling, etc as valuable and of good quality?
- What guidance did you receive about learning opportunities before starting your placement?
- What information have you been given regarding the minimum length of the programme?
- Have you been made aware of Fitness for Practice processes? Can you describe how this process operates?

- What guidance and information is provided to you on the potential impact of criminal or civil cautions and convictions on your career? When, and how, was this information made available to you?
- Were milestones in practice placement clearly signposted for you and were they evidently reflected as stages of proficiency development?
- Is the phased process towards the achievement of proficiencies and eligibility for professional and academic award, suitably signposted and clear?

Programme development and evaluation

- Do you contribute to programme improvement and is this promoted?
- What are your experiences of service user and carer contributions to the programme?
- Have you had the opportunity to feed back on your programme and placements, as well as your teachers, assessors, and supervisors?
- How has any feedback you've provided been acted on?
- Does your education institution provide you with as much information as reasonably possible in a timely way in order to feedback on your programme? Where programme changes are implemented is there sufficient communication and lead-in time?
- Does the external examiner meet with students?

Support

- Have you needed any support while in practice? Were the support systems satisfactory?
- Who do you go to for support at your education institution or practice placement, and who is your named/nominated person for each practice learning setting?

- How are you supported to take responsibility for your own learning?
- What support is available to develop your abilities in numeracy, literacy, digital and technological literacy?
- Were there any personal circumstances that needed consideration when arranging practice placement?
- What services are available to you to support you with physical and mental health? Do you feel supported?
- How were you prepared for learning in practice and are there adequate resources in place for this?

Concerns and complaints

- How would you respond, and who would you approach if you had concerns about your safety as a student, or the safety of a patient?
- What support is there to raise a concern?
- Have you raised a concern and how was it dealt with?



Diversity

- What information has been provided to you on equality and diversity? What have you personally experienced in regards to treatment and support for students with different learning and support needs?
- What parts of your programme are delivered/assessed in Welsh?
- Do you believe that diverse needs are respected and taken into account across all learning environments, with support and adjustments provided in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice?
- Have you required any adjustments in your assessments due to individual needs and if so who assessed this? If not, do you know how you would access these adjustments or special requirements if you were to require this?

How we monitor the quality of education

We regularly monitor education institutions to make sure their programmes continue to meet our standards and that they effectively manage risks such as students not having a supervisor available. We pass the information we collect back to education institutions and share it with other regulators so that we can promote good practice and ensure patient safety.

If you have concerns

If you have concerns about your programme then you should raise these within your education institution through the appropriate channels. If you still have concerns that your programme isn't meeting our standards, or there is a risk to patient safety then you should contact us at qateam@nmc-uk.org