

## Nursing and midwifery

United Kingdom nursing and midwifery has a long tradition of excellence, and although nursing and midwifery are recognised as separate professions, many practitioners have dual qualifications.

In order to train to be a nurse or midwife, students follow integrated theoretical and practical educational programmes. These programmes are run by universities and higher education institutions (HEIs), where there are opportunities to obtain both diploma and degree qualifications in England (degree programmes only in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Practical placements are undertaken in a range of healthcare settings including hospitals and the community.

There are a wide range of post-qualification opportunities in clinical nursing, nurse education and nursing management. Those interested in an academic career can enter Masters and PhD programmes, while more clinically based practical post-registration educational programmes are provided in a wide range of clinical specialities.

### **Checklist: Why study nursing and midwifery in the United Kingdom?**

- The United Kingdom's tradition of healthcare education is among the finest in the world, offering a wide variety of training for specialists
- Teaching is world-class, with excellent facilities
- UK qualifications are renowned and respected worldwide, and UK nursing skills are in demand
- You will be surrounded by English speakers, and your skills in English will open up work opportunities in many parts of the world
- You will be encouraged to develop independent learning skills, which will prepare you for life-long learning and continuing professional development.

## 1 What can I study?

Nursing and midwifery training in the United Kingdom (UK) is split into pre-registration training and post-registration (or post qualification) training. Pre-registration training is the initial training you do in order to qualify as a nurse or midwife. Post-registration (or post-qualification) training describes any further training you do once you have qualified.

### ***Pre-registration training***

It is important to note that international students applying for undergraduate courses may find it difficult to find a place in a nursing school. There are a number of institutions that do not accept undergraduate overseas students onto their nursing courses.

For further information please see [www.rcn.org.uk/members/advicefocus/students/overseas\\_students.php](http://www.rcn.org.uk/members/advicefocus/students/overseas_students.php) and [www.nmas.ac.uk](http://www.nmas.ac.uk) (section on 'Applying')

On successful completion of a pre-registration course participants are awarded dual qualifications, an academic award (diploma or degree) and professional award, allowing them to apply for registration on an appropriate part of the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) professional register.

There are many ways to qualify as a registered nurse:

- By taking a diploma-level pre-registration course
- By taking a degree combined with pre-registration education
- By taking an accelerated postgraduate diploma combined with pre-registration education for those graduates that hold a degree in a health-related subject.

Type of training	Characteristics	Qualification
<b>Diploma-level pre-registration course in nursing or midwifery (England only)</b>	Three-year course including clinical placements to gain experience. Available in the four branches of nursing (adult nursing, mental health nursing, learning disabilities nursing, children's nursing) and in midwifery.	Leads to the award of Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) and eligibility to register with the NMC on Parts 10, 12, 13, 14 or 15 (see 'How can I register as a professional?').
<b>Degree combined with pre-registration nursing or midwifery education</b>	Three or four years, including clinical placements to gain experience. Available in the four branches of nursing (see above) and in midwifery.	Leads to the award of a degree (usually BSc or BN) and eligibility to register with the NMC
<b>Postgraduate diploma with accelerated pre-registration nursing education</b>	Two-year course including clinical placements to gain experience. This can be in adult nursing, mental health nursing, learning disabilities or children's nursing. Applicants must have a degree in a related subject such as social studies or biological sciences	Leads to the award of Postgraduate Diploma and eligibility to register with the NMC
<b>Master combined with pre-registration nursing or midwifery education</b>	Two-year course leading to postgraduate diploma and registration and a further year at Masters level. Includes clinical placements to gain experience. A limited number of programmes available nationally in adult nursing, mental health nursing and midwifery. Applicants must have a degree in a related subject such as social studies or biological sciences.	Leads to the award of a degree (usually M Med Sc) and eligibility to register with the NMC.

Information on institutions offering nursing courses is available from [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/nhs-knowledge\\_base/data/4637.html](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/nhs-knowledge_base/data/4637.html) or you can telephone NHS Careers on +44 (0) 845 606 0655. A complete database of pre-registration courses offered in nursing and midwifery can be found on [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)

Note: applicants must decide which branch of nursing they want to qualify in before applying for training. This is important because universities have contracts with NHS Trusts (employers) to train a certain number of nurses with each type of qualification.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council approves all educational institutions that deliver pre-registration courses for nurses, midwives and health visitors.



### **Checklist: Choosing the right course**

- consider taking a degree course in nursing and midwifery – these courses are less difficult to get international students than diploma courses
- if you are looking to study in England, start your search on the National Health Service careers website [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk), which has details of associated careers as well as nursing
- if you are looking to study in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, contact the appropriate organisation listed under Section 5 'Where can I find more information?.'

## ***Post-registration (post-qualification) training***

### **Post-registration clinical courses**

There are many post-registration clinical courses available in every aspect of nursing and midwifery, for example:

- accident and emergency nursing
- intensive care nursing
- nursing elderly people
- oncological nursing
- gynaecological nursing
- thoracic nursing
- neonatal nursing.

Other options include a course in teaching and assessing others and a Certificate in Professional Studies for International Nurses. A course in a particular specialist area (e.g. thoracic nursing) will range in length from several days to several months. Because of the shortage of qualified experienced nurses to teach, supervise and assess students in practice, places on some specialist clinical courses are limited. For further details on courses, contact the NHSU helpline on +44 (0) 800 850 150 or visit <http://www.nhsu.nhs.uk/webportal/> or [www.rdlearning.org.uk](http://www.rdlearning.org.uk).

### **Post-graduate courses**


There are taught courses (nine-month postgraduate diplomas and twelve-month Masters) and research programmes (two-year MPhils and three year PhDs) in a wide range of nursing and midwifery subjects, for example:

- nursing management
- nurse education
- disaster relief nursing
- international child health
- cancer nursing
- advanced midwifery.

Many of them are modular in construction, allowing the mature professional to select the modules most appropriate to them and their work. Look for courses on [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org) or contact the NHSU helpline on +44 (0) 800 850 150 or visit [www.rdlearning.org.uk](http://www.rdlearning.org.uk).

### **Post-registration – Second registration courses**

These courses are a minimum of one year in length and are designed for those nurses who are already qualified in one branch of nursing, but wish to practice in another. These programmes are offered at Diploma or first degree level but there are a few available at Masters level.



These programmes can be taken in midwifery, adult nursing, children's nursing, mental health nursing and health visiting. Availability varies between Higher Education Institutions. For further details on courses, contact the NHSU helpline on +44 (0) 800 850 150 or visit [www.rdlearning.org.uk](http://www.rdlearning.org.uk).

## 2 Entrance

### ***Pre-registration training***

For nursing and midwifery, you must be at least seventeen years and six months old on the first day of the course (seventeen years old in Scotland).

### **Academic requirements**

You will need to provide evidence of numeracy and literacy. Universities will set their own entry criteria for entry onto diploma and degree programmes. For example, they may require 5 GCSEs (or an equivalent such as GNVQ Intermediate plus 1 GCSE grade A-C or AVCE in Health) for entry onto Diploma courses. A' levels including Biology, or two Scottish Highers with a science subject at SCE Standard Grade 1, 2 or 3 or an equivalent may be required for entry onto degree programmes.

Entry requirements (UK qualifications) are listed on the NHS Careers website at [www.nhs.uk/nhs-careers/knowledge\\_base/data/1146.html](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-careers/knowledge_base/data/1146.html)).

For guidance in assessing the equivalence of overseas qualifications please refer to the NHS Careers website at [www.nhs.uk/nhs-careers/knowledge\\_base/data/223.html](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-careers/knowledge_base/data/223.html) or see 'Where can I find more information?'

For mature applicants without recent academic study, Access courses are offered by many Further Education colleges. In addition to traditional routes, a range of alternative ways into pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes are being developed. These include cadet schemes, secondment by the NHS employer, foundation programmes and foundation degrees.

### **English proficiency requirements**

You should be able to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with patients in English, and may be required to gain a specific mark in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

### **Health requirements**

Because you will be required to work with ill and vulnerable people and those that may have infectious diseases, you will be required to have evidence of a positive health status and will be subject to an occupational health screening programme before commencing the course.

### **How do I apply?**

England – for diploma-level courses, apply through the Nursing and Midwifery Admissions Service (NMAS). For degree programmes, apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (refer to 'Where can I find more information?').

Scotland – for nursing diploma courses, apply through the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Central Applications to Training Clearing House (CATCH) Unit (this is currently for EU citizens only.) For undergraduate nursing and midwifery degree programmes, apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (refer to 'Where can I find more information?').

Wales and Northern Ireland – apply directly to the institution of your choice.

### **Post-registration clinical courses**

The course directors determine the entry requirements for these programmes. For courses that contain a clinical practice component, it is expected that applicants will be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and have at least six months' work experience in the subject to be studied.

### **Postgraduate courses**

If your postgraduate course involves practical experience with patients, you must be registered with the NMC. You do not have to register if your course is purely academic. NMC registration can be on a temporary or permanent basis.



## **Temporary registration**

It is possible to gain temporary registration for specific post-registration courses. There is a rigorous assessment for candidates, and the course must be approved by a higher education institution. You should apply to the director of the course you wish to attend.

## **3 How can I register as a professional?**

To practise as a nurse, midwife or health visitor in the UK (or to undertake a post-qualification course that involves practical experience with patients) you have to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The NMC maintains the professional register of these professions.

### **If I qualified overseas, will I be able to register with the NMC?**

If you did your training outside the European Union :

- the minimum requirement is that you must be a registered nurse or a registered midwife in your home country (however, not all overseas qualifications are automatically recognised by the NMC)
- the NMC cannot accept second-level qualifications such as Licensed Practice Nurse, Enrolled Nurse or State Certified Nurse for any part of the register
- it is now compulsory for you to achieve a satisfactory score (5.5 in each category and an overall band score of 6.5) in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before being considered for admission to the register.

You should apply to the NMC Overseas Registration Department, which will send you an application pack. This department will also help if you in doubt about your overseas qualifications.

The NMC considers each applicant individually following the payment of a fee and scrutiny of the applicant's documents. In many cases, the NMC will require you to undertake a period of supervised and assessed work experience before you can be registered. This placement can range from one to twelve months and must be carried out in an approved hospital or nursing home. Occasionally, the NMC may ask you to first gain experience in a specific area of nursing and midwifery in your own country.

If you did your training within the European Union, you will still be required to apply for NMC registration before you can practice as a qualified nurse; The NMC may also require evidence of English language competency from nurses trained in EU countries. For further information please see the NMC website at:

[www.nmc-uk.org/nmc/main/registration/Reg\\_Overseas\\_and\\_EU/Overseas\\_and\\_EU](http://www.nmc-uk.org/nmc/main/registration/Reg_Overseas_and_EU/Overseas_and_EU)

### **Will I achieve professional recognition abroad?**

Before applying for any programme you should contact the nurse registration/licensing authority and/or national nurse association in your country to ensure that the UK qualification you will obtain on completion of your course is recognised. You may have to take examinations on your return to your country in order to practise as a nurse or midwife there.

## **4 Next steps**

### **Checklist: Your next steps**

- 1 If you wish to study nursing or midwifery, check your academic qualifications against the requirements.
- 2 If you want to work in the UK, or to do a postgraduate course involving contact with patients, check whether you are eligible to register on the NMC professional register.
- 3 Look thoroughly through available courses.
- 4 Obtain the prospectus for any course that interests you from the institution offering it.
- 5 Always check thoroughly that your UK qualification will be recognised in the countries in which you want to work.

## 5 Where can I find more information?

### British Council Education information

Website [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at [www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm) which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

### EducationUK Scotland

Website [www.educationukscotland.org](http://www.educationukscotland.org)

### For study in Wales, contact :

Learn Direct +44 (0) 800 100 900

### Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Rosehill

New Barn Lane

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0) 870 1122200

Email [enq@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enq@ucas.ac.uk)

Website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### Careers Information Service

NHS Education for Scotland

22 Queen Street

Edinburgh EH2 1NT

Telephone +44 (0) 131 226 7371

Website [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk)

**NHS Careers** (for overseas qualifications Assessments service general careers and for course information for England)

P O Box 376

Bristol BS99 3EY

Telephone +44 (0) 845 606 0655

Fax +44 (0) 845 850 8866

Website [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)

### NHS Education for Scotland (NES)

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hanover Buildings

66 Rose Street

Edinburgh EH2 2NN

Telephone +44 (0) 131 225 4365

Website [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk)

### NHSU helpline

Learning for Health and Social Care

on +44 (0) 800 850 150

<http://www.nhsu.nhs.uk/webportal/>

Telephone +44 (0) 1870 1122206 (general enquiries)

Website [www.nmas.ac.uk](http://www.nmas.ac.uk)

### Other useful resources

*Healthcare Professions - Courses 2005* (UCAS/Trotman; 2005, ISBN 0 856609579) - The Complete Guide to Healthcare Professions Over 5,000 courses in 18 sections are listed and information includes entry requirements, descriptions of each discipline and common course characteristics.

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We are registered in England as a charity.

### NMC Overseas Registration Department

23 Portland Place

London W1B 1PZ

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7333 6600

Fax +44 (0) 20 7636 6935

Email [overseasreg@nmc-uk.org.uk](mailto:overseasreg@nmc-uk.org.uk)

Email [confirmation@nmc-uk.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@nmc-uk.org.uk)

Website [www.nmc-uk.org.uk](http://www.nmc-uk.org.uk)

### The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

23 Portland Place

London W1B 1PZ

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7637 7181

Fax +44 (0) 20 7436 2924

Website [www.nmc-uk.org.uk](http://www.nmc-uk.org.uk)

### Nursing and Midwifery Services (NMAS)

(to apply for pre-registration diploma courses in England)

Rosehill

New Barn Lane

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

### Royal College of Midwives

15 Mansfield Street

London W1G 9NH

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7312 3535

Website [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)

### Central Applications to Training Clearing House

(CATCH) (to apply for pre-registration

diploma courses in Scotland)

P O Box 21

Edinburgh EH2 1NT

Telephone +44 (0) 131 220 8660