



# BSc (Hons) Nursing Student Handbook

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# Section 1: Introduction to the BSc (Hons) Nursing programme

## 1.1 Welcome to the Open University

The Nursing programme team at The Open University would like to warmly welcome you to this exciting and innovative Future Nurse degree programme, which will be in part delivered also with the University of the West of England. This is the start of your journey toward professional registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The Open University has offered a pre-registration nursing programme since 2002, working in partnership with a wide range of health and social care partners and this blended learning programme currently offers the adult pathway.

Looking always to meet changing expectations in the external health and social care arena, as well as those of our student and professional regulatory bodies, our focus is to future proof through this Future Nurse Curriculum. In return we expect our students to participate with the learning opportunities we provide and take responsibility for managing their own learning and be ambassadors for the University and their chosen field of practice.

As you progress through your programme, you will develop knowledge and skills using a variety of different teaching methods and tools including enquiry-based learning via online tutorials using Adobe Connect; our online tutorial and learning system, clinical support and forum discussions, all underpinned by excellent scholarship and research. Throughout the qualification, you will consider ways in which the learning from module materials can inform your practice.

Support in practice will help you gain confidence and competence in your person-centred nursing practice. Innovative educational technologies have been employed to maximise and capitalise on the excellent learning and teaching opportunities available. Vibrant and diverse learning materials and activities are brought together to bring an exciting and innovative approach to learning. The curriculum is flexible and student-centred, responsive to the changing service requirements, and aims to produce nurses who can improve patient care experience in a professional, caring and cost-effective manner.

This Student Handbook provides you with information about your nursing programme and about the academic services that are here to support you. It is not intended to be exhaustive but should help you to understand your programme and provide you with the routes available to resolve any challenges you might experience. Please ensure that you do take time to read the handbook, familiarise yourself with its contents and return to it regularly when you have questions about the programme.

So, enjoy your study with the Open University and please utilise any support services that you need.

Nerys Bolton – Programme Lead, The Open University

Nicky Goodall, Programme Lead, University West of England

## 1.2 The pre-registration nursing curriculum changed in 2020. Why is this?

In May 2018, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) published, [Future Nurse, Standards of proficiency for registered nurses](#). Standards are regularly reviewed by the NMC so that nursing knowledge and skills remain contemporary and reflect the dynamic health needs of individuals across the UK. These standards set the standard necessary for nurses to deliver effective, safe and compassionate care. They set out what nurses and midwives need to know and be able to do by the time they register with the NMC and what approved education institutions (AEIs) and their practice placement partners must provide when delivering education and training courses. From September 2020, all Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) must deliver a curriculum that reflects the Future Nurse standards of proficiency so at the end of your programme, you will be amongst the first groups of learners to qualify against these new standards.

The key components of the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of registered nurses are designed to apply across all four fields of nursing practice (adult, children & young people, learning disabilities, mental health) and across all care settings. Although you will be registered against one field of practice, for example adult nursing, for many years it has been considered essential that registered nurses must be able to meet the person-centred, holistic care needs of individuals they encounter in their practice who may be at any stage of life and who may have a range of mental, physical, cognitive or behavioural health challenges. You will find therefore that opportunities for learning and gaining insight or experience from practice will extend beyond your own field of practice.

Additionally, the 2018 [NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment](#) outline changes to the way students are supervised and assessed with opportunity for other registered health and care professionals to support learners in practice. This will increase the pool of professionals available to support and improve the quality of student learning. The changes should allow greater independence of assessment, innovation, and development of placements across more practice settings.

Whichever your chosen field of practice, your programme of study has been designed to equip you with the appropriate knowledge and skills to meet the complex healthcare needs of members of the community across a range of practice settings promoting a population-based focus. Throughout the programme key concepts support the development of professional behaviours, inter-professional working, and the values and attitudes expected of a compassionate nurse who can demonstrate connectedness, emotional intelligence, and moral responsibility. This supports the integration of physical and mental health, as well as integration of care across health and social care. This will enable you, as a graduate of the Open University, to demonstrate the professional values expected to deliver high quality evidence informed care to children, young people, adults, families and carers. You will be a critical user of evidence enabling you to develop a well informed and creative approach to care, this includes critical engagement with research as well as other forms of evidence.

We have ensured that the curriculum reflects the four UK Nations, including relevant nation specific legislation and policy as well as core themes that will be embedded throughout the curriculum. These themes include: Quality Improvement, Safety and Enhancement, Safeguarding Across the Life course, Mental Capacity Legislation and Deprivation of Liberties, Mental Health and Wellbeing across the life course, Learning Disability across the life course, a Four-Nation perspective, and Leadership. Critically, skills development in alignment with The NMC (2018) standards and proficiencies will be addressed.

### 1.3 Rationale for the new curriculum

This Future Nurse Curriculum was developed following a critical review of our pre-registration provision in light of the publication of the Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards (NMC 2018) Future Nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses.

Additionally, the development of this exciting new programme has been influenced by the changing landscape of health and social care within the UK, recognising national and local agendas as well as policy drivers. For example, nationally 'Next steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View' (2017) and the NHS 10-year plan (2019) are both underpinned by the clear acknowledgement that the health service needs to change; and the "All Our Health" framework for personalised care and population health (Public Health England 2019) sets out changes for the future with the aim of integrating care for patients. The Department of Health Northern Ireland launched its Transformation Plan "Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together" in October 2016, providing a 10-year approach to transforming health and social care (Department of Health NI 2016). The Welsh Government published "A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care" outlining a strategy for a long-term future vision of a 'whole system approach to health and social care', focussed on health and wellbeing, and on preventing illness (Welsh Government 2019). The Scottish Government launched its Health and Social Care Delivery Plan in December 2016 which sets a clear intention to strengthen national leadership for the sustained protection and improvement of Scotland's health. NHS Health Scotland (2017) then published its Fairer Healthier Scotland: A strategic Framework for Action 2017-2022. This document sets out the key priorities for fairer health improvement in Scotland and provides a framework for the new public health body (NHS Health Scotland 2017). The programme is also underpinned by the Chief Nursing Officer's 2030 vision (Scottish Government, 2017), the GCU Common Good values and attributes (GCU, 2015) and the GCU Centre for Living research themes (GCU 2017).

The National Health Service (NHS) is facing several challenges, including demographic and workforce changes, a rise in long term conditions and complex comorbidities, continuing financial pressures, all combined with a rise in patient expectations. Populations no longer live in the world which the NHS was originally designed for. People live longer, medicine has advanced and technology is transforming the way individuals live, lifestyles and expectations have changed. Treating people in hospitals when they are ill is only a small part of modern health and social care. These challenges require new models of care, incorporating the need for a flexible and multi skilled workforce for the future. As well as building capacity in the workforce, registrant nurses need to be able to work within the fast-changing landscape of technology enabled services, and ever-changing applications for digital health and social care. Different models of service delivery are also required to address the integrated care agendas. There is also a need to take into account the changes that are taking place in society, as well as in health and social care, (NMC 2018). The argument, therefore, continues for workforce transformation in relation to nursing practice, and the further development of future roles and new ways of working (HEE 2017; NHS England 2017, 2019). It is therefore, envisaged that you as a future nurse graduating from the Open University will contribute and help to lead these changes.

The Open University and the partner University (UWE) aim to work in partnership with yourself as a student using Enquiry-Based Learning as an approach to embed co creation, creative engagement in your learning and to help ensure that we afford each student authentic learning. Students have also been involved in the co-production of the programme, its design, and how we will deliver it. This approach is in alignment with the University ambition and mission to transform lives and be open to people, places, methods and ideas, whilst also enabling future nurses to transform and contribute to quality healthcare delivery.

It is envisaged that the demand for our programmes across all fields of nursing practice will continue to grow with an ever-increasing need for health and social care professions and professionals to be educated to make decisions in the context of complexity, uncertainty and varying levels of risk. As an OU future graduate of nursing you will be able to work with other health and social care professionals in different care settings with diverse populations and with adults, children and young people or adults with



complex needs. You will be able to cope with challenges within Health and Social Care and the changing technological advances that will ensure that digitally enabled care is the norm.

## 1.4 Programme Philosophy

The underpinning philosophy of your nursing programme is 'Person-Centred', placing the individual at the heart of their care. An approach whereby the person is at the centre of the decision-making processes and the design of their care needs, their nursing care and treatment plan. It is a way of thinking and providing health care to ensure that care is personalised to the individual. It is also about focusing care on the needs of individual and ensuring that people's preferences, needs and values guide clinical decisions. It is also about providing care that is respectful of and responsive to the individual needs of the child, young person, adult and their families or carers. This therefore requires a holistic and inclusive approach to care and facilitates shared decision making between the individual service user and those delivering care and services. In turn service users are viewed as individuals who play an important part in decisions that are made about their care delivery.

The theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum philosophy also align with virtue ethics, theories of human caring across the lifespan, personalised care, family-centred care, salutogenesis and professionalisation. Salutogenesis is fundamental to the philosophy allowing a focus on factors that support human health and well-being rather than on factors that cause disease (pathogenesis). Personalised care represents a new relationship between people, professionals and the system. It is about making the most of the expertise, capacity and potential of people, families and communities. To recognise the value of nursing, students and staff will work collaboratively and creatively in the teaching and learning experience, to positively influence the nursing student's personal and professional development. Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) is used to facilitate this development at levels 2 & 3 of your programme to facilitate students acquiring requisite knowledge and skills. EBL is a student-centred teaching approach that motivates and engages students with direct decision making, applied analytical thinking and results in competent, reflective, autonomous practitioners, able to think critically, problem solve and respond in the ever-changing landscape of health and social care. This research-orientated approach will inspire students to learn for themselves in readiness for lifelong learning and leadership.

The values-based curriculum philosophy articulates how becoming and being a qualified 21<sup>st</sup> century nurse will be cultivated throughout the programme. To generate a personal, caring and compassionate approach to evidence-based nursing practice, the curriculum embeds key concepts such as: connectedness, affective awareness, emotional intelligence and resilience to support the student to nurture safe practice and moral responsibility.

Therefore, the overarching philosophy of the curriculum represents the shared values and beliefs of key stakeholders, such as Open University staff, practice colleagues, nursing students, service users across the life course, carers and families to identify what being a compassionate and caring nurse means and therefore, the kind of nurse the curriculum needs to enable and develop. This values-based approach places students as partners of the learning process and moreover at the centre of the curriculum. The programme will foster students' ability to make sound clinical judgments and to continuously improve nursing care delivery through effective leadership, critical thinking and life-long learning. Moreover, it will support the development of person-centred graduate nurses who demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required of a health care practitioner in the 21st century.

The programme is an integrated curriculum and therefore the fields of practice have been integrated throughout to prepare registrants to work with service users across the four fields of practice. Therefore, this overarching programme philosophy applies to all four fields of nursing practice (adult, children and young people, learning disabilities, mental health). However, the operationalisation of this philosophy will demonstrate field of practice variance as follows:

- Whilst level one studies takes a generic approach, during the programme, nursing students will be allocated an Academic Assessor registered within their own chosen field of practice at the start of their module.
- Academic Assessors for each 'Part' of the programme will be registrants of the student's own chosen field of practice
- All modules will have a module team attached which will consist of academic staff from each field: adult, children and young people, learning disabilities and mental health nursing

- Within the modules there will be master classes and enhancement activities that will enable the student to develop expertise within their chosen field of practice
- EBL scenarios will be contextualised to each field whilst also integrating physical and mental health care in order to achieve parity of esteem (HM Government, 2011)

To ensure that the programme incorporates learning opportunities to meet all NMC (2018) proficiencies, as well as reconcile the expectation that students will be able to demonstrate skills and undertake procedures at an appropriate level for their intended field of practice, Annexe A and Annexe B have been mapped across the programme for all students reflecting *variance appropriate* to each field of practice in relation to:

- Annexe A, Section 3 “Evidence-based, best practice communication skills and approaches for providing therapeutic interventions apply to all registered nurses, but the level of expertise and knowledge required will vary depending on the chosen field of practice. Registered nurses must therefore be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake these procedures at an appropriate level for their intended field(s) of practice” (NMC, 2018, Future nurse: Standards of proficiency, p27)
- Annex B, Part 1 “Procedures for assessing needs for person-centred care, sections 1 and 2 apply to all registered nurses, but the level of expertise and knowledge required will vary depending on the chosen field(s) of practice. Registered nurses must therefore be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake these procedures at an appropriate level for their intended field(s) of practice” (NMC, 2018, Future nurse: Standards of proficiency, p31).

## 1.5 Mission statement

Our mission is to ensure that Open University nursing graduates leave this programme as a person-centred, proficient registrant. You will therefore feel empowered to lead on evidence based integrated care for all people. Equipped with digital literacy skills you will understand the importance of being and becoming a technology enabled nurse for the future. The programme team is committed to developing nurses who can make a difference to the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and populations, shaping the future health and social care landscape.

## 1.6 Programme aims

The aim of this programme is for you to develop all the skills and proficiencies you need to be a Registered Nurse. The programme enables you to engage actively with practice while you study, provided you have the support of your academic assessor, with a balance of theory and practice delivered through practice-based and distance learning. During the course, you will experience a range of alternative practice settings developing the professional skills and knowledge to deliver high quality, safe and effective person-centred care for people with varied health needs in a range of care settings.

On successful completion of the course you will be able to register as a Registered Nurse (Adult) with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This qualification can also be undertaken as a degree apprenticeship in England and Northern Ireland, in accordance with each country's specific requirements.

## 1.7 Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme contains a number of critical learning outcomes around your Knowledge and Understanding, Cognitive Skills, Key Skills and Practical and/or Professional Skills.

### Knowledge and Understanding

When you complete your studies for this qualification, you will have knowledge and understanding of:

<b>KU1</b>	a systematic and extensive knowledge and understanding of the contemporary context for health and social care, the range of settings and the principles of integrated, person-centred care.
<b>KU2</b>	an extensive knowledge and critical understanding of the biological, pharmacological, physical, socio-cultural, political, legal, ethical, organisational and psychological concepts and theories relevant to contemporary nursing practice.
<b>KU3</b>	an understanding of the principles of research, the evidence base for healthcare and nursing practice, and the ability to recognise the potential uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge.

### Cognitive Skills

On completion of this qualification you will have developed the following cognitive skills:

<b>CS1</b>	Critique concepts and information from a wide range of sources, including current research, scholarly, and professional literature, and evaluate applicability for nursing and healthcare.
<b>CS2</b>	Critically analyse risks in health and social care and evaluate strategies for improving safety and quality.

### Key Skills

When you complete this qualification you will be able to:

<b>KS1</b>	Demonstrate problem-solving, decision-making and critical thinking skills, applied to nursing practice.
<b>KS2</b>	Communicate effectively and manage relationships with service users, families, carers and health and social care colleagues, using a range of appropriate methods and applying emotional intelligence.
<b>KS3</b>	Demonstrate the literacy, digital literacy, technological literacy and numeracy skills required to ensure safe and effective nursing practice.
<b>KS4</b>	Demonstrate effective skills in leadership, management, coordination, teamworking and collaboration

### Practical and/or Professional Skills

When you complete this qualification, you will be able to:

<b>PPS1</b>	Demonstrate achievement of the Nursing and Midwifery Council proficiencies for registered nurses in the chosen field of practice (either Adult, Mental Health or Learning Disabilities)
<b>PPS2</b>	Demonstrate resilience and acknowledge the impact and demands of professional nursing practice on your personal health and wellbeing, engaging in self-care and accessing support when required.

**PPS3** Demonstrate independent learning skills and the ability to learn from feedback, reflecting on your own personal and professional development, and demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning.

## 1.8 Pedagogy (The approach to teaching)

Constructive alignment is the curricular approach chosen to underpin this value-based caring framework (Biggs, 2003). This means that you will construct meaning from the range of relevant learning activities available throughout the programme. Teaching is viewed as a catalyst for your learning. The 'alignment' aspect refers to what the teacher does, which is to set up a learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The teaching methods used and the assessment tasks, are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme and of the individual modules that you will be studying within the programme. Our task is to get you to engage in activities which help you achieve those learning outcomes. You will demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes within the range of assessment tasks that you will undertake within each module. You will need to demonstrate different levels of understanding as you progress through the programme.

As a student you will be exposed to more than an empirical basis for future practice. We will adopt a holistic approach whereby students work as partners in their learning, but also take responsibility for their learning both in practice and theory. To effectively teach caring and compassion, academics must also role model these attributes to nursing students (Sawatzky et al. 2009). This involves accepting and treating students as having value, worth, and the potential for growth. Therefore, facilitators of learning must enable students to develop throughout the programme in a structured way that builds and fosters their development from novice to proficient practitioner (Benner 1984, 2001). This is achieved in part through the application of emotional intelligence to understand self and to develop the personal integrity of the health and social care of the student as a leader.

In practice-based learning/placements you will as a student move from novice to advanced beginner, onwards to becoming competent. The 'expert' stage to then be developed over a period of time post-registration (Benner 1984). Therefore, in level 1 you will be expected to demonstrate guided participation in care, performing with increasing confidence and competence. In level 2 we expect you to become more "Competent" in your abilities, through active participation in care with minimal guidance and performing with increased confidence and competence. By the end of your programme and level 3 you will be able to demonstrate your ability to achieve the NMC's (2018) generic and field specific proficiencies and be regarded as eligible for registration with the NMC. The expectation being that at the end of the programme you will be able to practise independently with minimal supervision, lead and co-ordinate care with confidence.

## 1.9 What is different about being an Open University student?

The OU's mission of being open to people, places, methods and ideas aims to provide access to higher education to all, regardless of their circumstances.

As an OU student you often choose when and where you study, whether that's at home in the evenings, in the local library at the weekend, in the office after work or on the move during your commute. This is different from going to a traditional university, college or school where you would be expected to be at a set place, at a specific time. It also allows you to continue working and develop your new-found knowledge and skills in the workplace.

Studying on your own doesn't mean that you'll be isolated or unsupported in your studies. You'll have a tutor for all the modules you study, as well as a team of people at the OU and UWE to support you in succeeding in your studies and beyond.

The use of Adobe Connect synchronous tuition (online tutorials) means that when used you will come together with other students at fixed times, so you need to make yourself available for these sessions. This is especially important when you are working as part of EBL groups as you will be working closely with a small number of other learners. We will make sure you have plenty of notice of this via your module study planner.

To support your studies, you will receive high-quality materials that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, wherever you have an internet connection. Please try not to fall behind with your studies and if you find that you are struggling, please contact your Personal Tutor or Academic Assessor to discuss how you might be helped to get back on track or what your options might be.

Remember there are lots of people to support you and provide information, advice and resources. Don't struggle. Ask for support early.



## Section 2: Programme structure

### 2.1 What is the programme structure?

The programme is delivered as one of two qualifications, the Standard programme (R39) or the Apprenticeship programme (R43) the content and structure of which is identical.

**R39 - Standard: BSc (Honours) Nursing**

**R43 - Registered Nursing Degree Apprenticeship (RNDA): BSc (Honours) Nursing**

Both qualifications are delivered through one of the four chosen specialisms structured across the below levels of theory and practice modules.

- **Adult**
- **Children & Young people**
- **Learning Disabilities**
- **Mental Health**

	Theory	Practice
Level 1	Introduction to health and social care K102 (60 credits)	Introduction to healthcare practice K104 (60 credits)
Level 2	Understanding nursing: knowledge and theory K210 (60 credits)	Developing nursing practice K211 (60 credits)
Level 3	Assimilating nursing: knowledge and theory K325 (60 credits)	Becoming an autonomous practitioner (60 credits) K326 Adult K327 Mental Health K328 Learning Disability K329 Children and Young People

### 2.2 How flexible is the programme?

Our nursing degree and apprenticeship start dates allow students some flexibility for the length of their study:

**October:**

3 years (164 weeks)

4 years (215 weeks)

**February:**

3 years (164)

4 years 4 months (224 weeks)

All routes and students study together at level 1. If students need to change the length of their studies, it may be possible to opt onto the three- or four-year option at level 2. This must be in agreement with their tutor.

### 2.3 Nationwide and local study

Much of the course material has been developed to address the learning outcomes and NMC standards (2018) with a UK-wide perspective. At times, we intentionally focus on individual nations/state (i.e. Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, England and Bailiwick of Guernsey) to give you a local perspective. In addition, you will need to meet local level legislation, policy and training standards relevant to your geographical region of practice and field of practice (adult, mental health, learning disability or child). Your staff tutors will be able to support you if you have any queries regarding your nursing practice as you progress through the course.

## Section 3: Learning and Assessment

### 3.1 Learning and Teaching on the programme

#### 3.1.1 What is the learning and teaching strategy?

The BSc (Hons) nursing programme integrates both academic and practice-based learning. This pre-registration nursing programme includes a range of teaching methods recognising that students have different preferred learning styles. During the programme you will learn directly from your experiences in practice and through knowledge and understanding acquired from specially prepared learning materials. You will be able to focus your learning on your field of practice although you will have the opportunity to reflect on practices across all four fields (Adult, Children & Young People, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health).

Each module guides your learning by providing underlying theory on key concepts and evidence-based knowledge to enable you to learn the necessary skills to practise nursing.

During levels 2 & 3, you will use an EBL approach to your learning. You will be encouraged to reflect on what you learn, carry out activities and participate in group learning. You'll learn more of this process as we introduce this in the programme, but we hope the peer learning that this approach provides will help avoid feelings of isolation that students can experience when studying via distance learning. For level 2 and level 3 modules, EBL uses scenarios that reflect real life situations and the complexity of healthcare, people's health needs across the lifespan and the range of care settings. Learning will be in small facilitated groups and you will develop skills to become an independent learner, who can identify your learning needs, seek out and appraise information, and apply your learning in practice.

Information literacy and evidence-based practice are integral to your learning, throughout and beyond the Programme.

To progress through the qualification, you will be required to integrate your theoretical learning (learning for practice) and your practice-based learning (learning in practice) in order to inform the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person and family-centred care.

As you progress, you will be expected to learn and practise increasingly independently and will be encouraged to form 'communities of learning' with other students on the qualification. This will be promoted through online discussion forum activities, online tutorials using Adobe Connect, telephone and email contact. An academic assessor, practice-based supervisors and practice-based assessors will facilitate and support your practice learning in each setting where you gain experience.

#### 3.1.2 How do I learn?

Your learning begins with studying the module materials which can be accessed from module websites. The Student Dashboard on each module provides a guide to all aspects of your study, including the recommended order of visiting the learning materials and associated forums, and the hyperlinks that will enable you to access web-based materials and the online formative assignments for the module. It will also provide a progress monitor to see how you are progressing. You'll have access to an online study planner to guide you through each week. This can be a great starting point when planning your studies.

You will learn directly from your experiences in practice and through knowledge and understanding acquired from specially prepared learning materials. These materials use a variety of learning approaches, including service user and carer accounts, self-assessment questions, video and audio materials, reference texts, computer-aided learning packages, directed reading, formative and summative interactive computer-marked assessments (iCMAs), forums, tutorials, and web-based resources.

### 3.1.3 How do I learn on a distance learning course?

As an OU student you can often choose when and where you undertake your academic study. As highlighted above in section 1.9, this may be at home in the evenings, in the local library at the weekend, or on the move during your commute. This is different from going to a traditional university, college or school where you would be expected to be at a set place, at a specific time. Studying on your own doesn't mean that you'll be isolated or unsupported in your studies. You'll have an allocated tutor for the modules you study, as well as a team of people at the OU to support you in succeeding in your studies and beyond. When you are part of an EBL group, your tuition will be via synchronous tuition therefore please make yourself available at times of tuition to connect with your fellow peers and tutors.

It will though be important that you establish a work schedule and study pattern that suits you. Planning ahead will be important. It will not mean giving up your social life but instead you will need to get the balance right between your study, work/practice-based learning, social and personal commitments. You might wish to think about which time of day you find it best to study. It might be when you are better able to concentrate, or less likely to be distracted. You will also need to plan ahead for what you need to do each day.

It may be helpful to adopt the following approach to your learning:

- Engage in short, frequent study sessions of about an hour. This may be more productive than for example, engaging in one long three-hour session.
- Take regular breaks, about 10 - 15 minutes to refresh your thinking.
- Stop or move on to something else if not progressing.

***Think about what works for you, how good you are at managing your time and the steps you need to take to support your learning.***

Don't forget that even when you study on your own, you can meet your fellow students, the module tutors and the module team through the online forums, which are accessed via the website.

An introduction to supported open learning and what to expect when studying with the OU is available in the free OpenLearn course '[Am I ready to be a distance learner?](#)' and the OU induction resource for those who are [New to OU study](#).

### 3.1.4 What will I learn?

You will learn about the underpinning theory to enable you to be a compassionate, knowledgeable nurse working in a modern health care setting. This encompasses developing specific understanding of sociology, anatomy and physiology, psychological changes and specific conditions across the lifespan and service user groups in diverse settings.

All modules will support your achievement of the NMC's proficiencies. These proficiencies are: Being an accountable professional; Promoting health and preventing ill health; Assessing needs and planning care; Providing and evaluating care; Leading and managing nursing care and working in teams; Improving safety and quality of care; Coordinating care.

You will learn and develop the skills to be able to demonstrate specified communication and relationship management skills, and nursing procedures. Throughout the programme you will develop more advanced skills applied to your specified field of practice.

### 3.1.5 What is EBL?

EBL is a method of learning in which learners first encounter a challenge/concern or issue (the enquiry) from practice which they explore by a systematic, student-centred enquiry process. Typically, students

work in small groups with a tutor who acts as a facilitator of discussions and learning rather than as a direct source of information.

You will be introduced to this approach to learning in Level 2 of your programme and utilise this approach throughout the remainder of the programme.

Using the teaching and learning strategy of EBL tutors will be facilitators – encouraging small groups of learners to examine the learning that emerges from the triggers of the unfolding scenarios. You will work in small groups with students from your own field of practice.

### 3.1.6 What is reflection and reflective writing?

Many of the activities in your modules ask you to think back over things you have already read and see if you understand them or can apply them to your own life. 'Thinking back' in this way is a vital component of what we mean by reflection. Reflection allows us to learn from what went well, and from our mistakes, to ensure that we become better at what we do. Models and frameworks, for example, Gibbs' (1988) model, are frequently applied to facilitate reflective practice. By applying this systematic method of evaluating, analysing, problem-solving, identifying patterns and creating meaning you will not only reach a higher level of learning, but you will also be able to identify your own learning needs, improve your professional development, and make better professional decisions and judgement calls (meeting the requirements of each situation).

Keeping a note of your reflections in a learning journal helps you to both record and consolidate your learning. Using a journal in this way ensures that you capture your thoughts; otherwise there is always a strong possibility that they are lost.

Reflective writing will help you to clarify, develop and demonstrate (to yourself as well as others) the connections between your prior knowledge and experience (theory and practice), your new learning, the rationale for your learning and future practice, and identify what you have yet to learn. Reflecting on your successes is a basis for successful practice, while reflecting on mistakes or problems can help you avoid repeating them or help to find an appropriate solution. This forms the basis of personal and professional development planning (continuing professional development or CPD). Reflective writing is explorative in nature; it includes description (What? When? Who?), and analysis (How? Why? What if?) and can also result in more questions than answers.

### 3.1.7 What does level 1,2 and 3 study mean?

Your pre-registration nursing qualification is divided into levels and modules of study. Just as you progress through three stages in your practice learning, you progress through three academic levels as you study the qualification. In doing so you will gain confidence and skills in expressing yourself in writing to create a balanced argument, critical thinking and critical evaluation skills.

→ **It is important that you take responsibility for your own learning as an adult learner.**

Level 1: At Level 1 you demonstrate your knowledge about what you find out while discussing relevant topics. Its purpose is to stimulate and facilitate interest in health and social care and how it is applied to your care settings. You are encouraged to describe what you have learned. This will link into your practice experiences of the unique needs of the various client groups you meet while in your core practice base and alternative care setting.

Level 2: At Level 2 you not only discuss what you have found out, but you apply it to your own practice as a student nurse. At this level you assimilate a substantial amount of knowledge so that you can gain insight into and understand the diverse range of client and patient groups you will encounter and how to address their needs through analysis of their needs set against the evidence-based responses of care services.

Level 3: By Level 3 you develop the critical skills of analysis to work in a complex health care setting as an autonomous and innovative nurse. You develop your skills of analysis and critique where the emphasis is not on the amount of knowledge you have accumulated but on how you handle and critique that knowledge.

### 3.1.8 I am in a tutor group. How is this organised?

You'll normally be part of a group of students, typically in practice-based modules groups of 15-25 students from all fields of practice, whereas for Enquiry Based Learning you will be in a smaller group of 8 students who are in the same field of practice. These are supported by the same tutor. Interaction with your tutor group varies depending on the module, but you usually have a tutor group forum where you can discuss ideas online. You may also meet and work with members of your tutor group and other tutor groups in online tutorials.

### 3.1.9 What is a forum?

These are online discussion areas where you can interact with other students. They are moderated by your tutors. The forums could be specific to your tutor group, include students from several different tutor groups or could be module wide. You'll find these on your module website. On most modules participation in the forums is optional but sometimes there are activities where participation counts towards an assignment. You'll be clearly told if this is the case.

#### ✓ Tutor group forum

The tutor group forum is just for you and the rest of your tutor group. How the forum is used will depend on the individual module. On some modules it will be used for discussion of module content and activities. Your tutor will usually start any formal discussions or activities. Your tutor may also use this forum to share information with you, such as tutorial notes.

#### ✓ Module-wide forum

The module-wide forum is available to everyone registered on the module, and all OU staff with a connection to the module. It usually opens before the tutor group forum and is a good place to get early questions answered and get in touch with other students.

### 3.1.10 How are online tutorials organised?

Each module requires you to engage in a series of tutorials to support your learning. These are organised in a virtual 'room' (using Adobe Connect). The tutorials are facilitated by one (or more) tutors. Participation is mandatory as the tutorials contribute to your required learning hours, so that you can register with the NMC on completion of your course. Therefore, it is important you pay attention on your study calendar as to when the tutorials are scheduled (these are found in the module website). The tutorials are held with 15-20 students across all four fields of practice, so that you benefit from broad perspectives during your learning.

However, unlike other modules on the course, the scheduling of EBL tutorials in K210 and K325 will be negotiated with your tutor and peers. The first week (i.e. the Introductory tutorial) will provide opportunity for you to feed into a group decision to agree when tutorials will be held. It is anticipated that you will leave this session with a clear understanding of the arrangements in place for tuition. Therefore, you will be aware of the times/dates during the entire presentation of the module. In the exceptional circumstance that you did miss a tutorial, please refer to the Module Guide for detailed instructions on what to do. These tutorials are in smaller groups of approximately 8 students, within the same field of nursing practice.

### 3.1.11 What is Adobe Connect?

Your tutorials will take place in our online rooms, using software called Adobe Connect. Links to joining the tutorials will be on the tutorials page for your module. You can think of these as virtual meeting rooms, where you can talk (by voice or text) to other students and tutors, and see material shared by the tutor, have a go at online polls, contribute your thoughts and ideas in discussions and sometimes work in small groups with other students.

As with all online systems, getting to grips with this can take a little bit of getting used to and the best thing to do is to have a go! All you need to get started is a broadband connection, a head set with an integrated microphone. The [student guide for Online Rooms](#) provides some really useful information to help you get started. We encourage you to [watch the familiarisation video](#).

You'll find it becomes easier the more you use Adobe Connect and all of the tutors, and your fellow students will all have had some teething experiences when starting off. They will help you with tips and advice to use it to its full potential and enable you to fully engage with the many learning activities it offers. If you do need help accessing a room and getting started, you can contact the Computing Helpdesk on: +44 (0) 1908 653972 or you can fill out a web form or make use of the [webchat facility](#) offered as part of the [Help Centre](#).

The functions in Adobe Connect will be the same for each module. Many modules will record tutorials just in case you're unable to attend, or if you want to revisit them later to help refresh your memory or when you are revising. You'll find information on your module website about how to access these recordings.

Attending live tutorials provides the best opportunity for your learning. You learn most when you're actively engaging with what's going on – and that is much easier to do when there are other students and your tutor in there with you at the same time. Being able to ask questions and join in makes a lot of difference!

### 3.1.12 Masterclasses

Throughout your progression in the modules, you will have the opportunity to attend 'Masterclasses'. These have been developed to address a wide variety of contemporary topics in nursing and healthcare practice. A range of presenters, such as nurse academic staff (from the OU), NHS or Private, Independent and Voluntary (PVI) service representatives and services users will share their specialist knowledge and insights, providing you with a broader perspective on relevant topics.

The Masterclasses are additional to your module tutorials. Attendance at masterclasses is optional. However, we highly recommend that you participate fully to benefit from the unique learning opportunities and knowledge offered. The masterclasses will be scheduled in the module website (so you have plenty of notice) and will be delivered via Adobe Connect (unless advised otherwise) each lasting 60 minutes. Normally there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions, either during or at the end of the masterclass.

### 3.1.13 Do I need to undertake the online activities?

There are online activities within each module that are an essential part of your study. These may be associated with EBL, videos, audio material or accompanying text. You will be directed to these from the learning material. Although some may not be assessed directly, the activities will help you to engage with the material and add context to your learning. They also help inform you and tutors of your understanding/application of the learning material as you progress.

### 3.1.14 How do I plan my studies?

Your study planner shows the module activity week-by-week. You're given the date that the week starts and any specific resources you need to access. If your course has an online guide, then there are clear links to this as well. You can use the planner to keep track of your progress by clicking the progress indicators on the planner. You have the choice of having either a narrow view (just the current three weeks of information shown) or an expanded view (showing all weeks). The planner is a great way of finding out what you should be doing.



## 3.2 Assessment

### 3.2.1 What is the Assessment Strategy?

The core purpose of assessment across the modules in the BSc (Hons) Nursing is to ensure that you achieve the qualification's learning outcomes, which are aligned with the NMC proficiencies for registered nurses, required for registration with the NMC. In order to complete the pre-registration nursing qualification successfully, you must demonstrate an appropriate level of theoretical knowledge and a range of specified essential nursing skills that will enable you to practise as a safe and competent practitioner.

We understand that assessment can be a cause of anxiety for students and you will have to write academic essays, but we have designed the assessment strategy to include a range of assessment types which will relate to activities you will have to undertake as a registered nurse. There is also lots of support available to help you with your assignments. You can get some useful advice on assessment from students who are currently studying with the OU in the [OU Student's association videos on YouTube](#). You will also find lots of useful information in section 5 of this handbook.

The assessment strategy aims to enable you to fulfil your potential, at each level of the qualification and to prepare you for employment as a competent registered nurse. Assessment builds from developing your confidence in your performance, self-assessment and reflecting on your learning and practice at level 1, through to demonstration of independent learning, problem-solving and decision-making, critical analysis and synthesis of information, and developing and presenting complex arguments at level 3. There is a strong emphasis on developing professional skills and proficiencies, particularly in the practice modules. Each module will have a single component assessment strategy comprising a series of assessment tasks, which are aligned with the learning outcomes and develop different skills.

You will be assessed at increasing levels of complexity as you progress through the qualification. Some assessments are designed to be formative and the feedback is intended primarily for you to reflect and learn from. Other assessments will be summative and provide a formal assessment of competence that will determine your progression through the qualification and count towards the classification of your degree at levels 2 and 3.

Your practice modules will be assessed using the Practice Assessment Documentation (PAD). In each practice learning module, you must successfully complete skills and proficiencies, developed under supervision and assessed by a named practice assessor, on a Pass/Fail basis. Other compulsory NMC components for each practice learning module are completion of required practice learning hours and confirmation of good health and good character. More information about using the PAD and practice experience is explored in section 4 of this handbook.

You will have opportunities to practise for assessments through self-assessment quizzes and activities embedded in your learning guides in your modules. You will be introduced and supported to achieve the practice assessment criteria at regular meetings with your practice supervisors and assessors.

The general regulations and processes concerning assessment in the OU can be found in the [Help Centre](#)

You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the [Student Policies and Regulations](#) in particular those show below:

[Assessment Handbook](#)

[Code of practice for student assessment](#)

[Code of practice for student discipline](#)

[Changing your study plans policy \(deferrals, withdrawals and cancellation\)](#)

[Policy on plagiarism](#)

### 3.2.2 How will the programme be assessed?

Throughout the programme you will be assessed both in the University and in clinical practice using a range of methods. These include:

- Essays
- Case studies
- Interactive computer marked assignments (iCMA)
- Reflective accounts
- Reports
- Practice Assessments and proficiencies and procedures Document (PAD)

The assessments are designed to allow you to develop skills you need to be a competent registered nurse. These include writing reports, reflecting on your practice, designing information leaflets, producing care plans and service improvement plans. As a registered nurse you need to be able to problem-solve, make decisions, analyse information and present complex arguments. To do this you need to be able to search and evaluate relevant evidence and develop academic writing skills by producing essays, reports and writing reflective accounts. Your knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pharmacology will be assessed mainly through interactive computer marked assignments.

Each module of the qualification has its own assessment scheme, details of which can be found in the Assessment Guidance on the module website. You will receive feedback on your performance on all assessments, which will enable you to plan how to meet your development needs.

→ **NB:**

**To meet the requirements to pass each of the three practice modules, you must submit your completed PAD and undertake an End of Module Assignment, by the required dates.**

The Open University takes its responsibility to integrate and promote Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, British Values, Safeguarding and PREVENT very seriously. It is an essential part of your nursing journey. You need to demonstrate your role and responsibilities as both a learner, an employee and a colleague. You will need to keep your mandatory training up to date throughout the programme.

### 3.2.3 Do I have to complete assessments for all my modules?

All assessments are compulsory.

Each module has a single component assessment which can include Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA), Interactive Computer Marked Assignments (iCMAs) and an End of Module assessment (EMA). The pass mark for the continuous assessment component and the EMA components is 40%. In your practice modules you must also submit your PAD. These are graded as pass or fail.

There is a resubmission opportunity if required.

### 3.2.4 What do I do if I feel unable to submit an assignment?

Extensions are permitted for TMAs (but not EMA) but check the module assessment guidance and the Undergraduate Assessment Handbook which is available online. You must contact your tutor for advice and guidance when factors are impacting on your study which may affect your ability to keep to the assessment deadlines.

For exams and EMA's if a situation arises which affects your performance you can submit special circumstances. You can also contact the Student Support Team for advice and guidance. There is a link to your Student Support Team on your [StudentHome page](#).

### 3.2.5 What is formative assessment?

You will be prepared for the academic assessments not only through teaching and learning sessions and associated activities but also through formative assessments. Formative assessments are important and allow you to test your knowledge and get feedback on your work. The feedback you get doesn't count towards your final result but helps you to develop. Some formative assignments are compulsory, so you must submit them even though the scores don't contribute to your result.

### 3.2.6 What is summative assessment?

Summative assessments are used to determine whether you have achieved the learning outcomes for the module. You need to pass all components of the summative assessment. This may include TMA's, iCMA's, EMA or PAD. The scores for these assignments count towards your final result.

The assessment strategy for your module will tell you which category each assignment falls into. You can access the assessment strategy from StudentHome. In the centre panel, under the title of the module you are enrolled on, select 'Assessment', then select 'Assessment strategy'. You'll be given a zero score for any summative assignment you don't submit.

### 3.2.7 What is Single Component Assessment?

Single Component Assessment (SCA) is where your module grade is determined solely through a weighted average of all the assessment tasks.

This will include your TMAs (+ iCMAs where appropriate) and an EMA. Your module grade will be determined solely through a straight average of all the assessment tasks. To pass the module you require a final mark of 40% or above.

The assessment strategy for each module will outline the specific assessment tasks, weightings and dates for work to be submitted.

You must engage with the final assessment task in order to be eligible for a resit/resubmission opportunity.

### 3.2.8 What is a TMA (Tutor marked assignment)?

Tutor-marked assignments are spread across the study time for your module. You will be given time in your study planner to prepare your TMA, and guidance to help you. Your allocated tutor will provide feedback and a mark for TMAs. Tutors use detailed marking guidelines to ensure consistency. Your tutor will return your marked TMA with feedback that will help you focus on areas to develop for future work.

### 3.2.9 What is iCMAs (interactive computer-marked assignments)?

Modules may also use iCMAs as part of assessment. As with TMAs they are designed to help you learn. Many of them give you instant feedback, and if you haven't answered the question correctly you may also be given the chance to try again.

If your module uses iCMAs you will be able to locate them in the Assessment section on your module website.

### 3.2.10 What is an EMA (end of module assignment)

Some modules have an end-of-module assessment (EMA). This is a larger assignment you do at the end of a module and is completed and submitted in a similar way to TMAs but brings together what you've learned across the module and is in place of an exam.

The EMA will be submitted online to the OU secure servers, marked, moderated and managed through the established OU assessment and quality assurance processes.

You will need to have recorded a PASS in each component of the module assessment in order to PASS the qualification. There is no compensation between assessments and two attempts only may be made at any assessment. All assessments will be subject to the Open University regulations which are described in the Assessment Handbook

If you have declared a disability to the University, we will be able to make adjustments and special arrangements if you require them. Further information is contained in the [Accessibility policy](#).

### 3.2.11 How do I submit my assignments?

You'll usually submit TMAs and EMAs using the OU's online eTMA (electronic tutor-marked assignment) system. You can access the eTMA system from your module record page on StudentHome. You can practise using the eTMA system before your first assignment is due by sending a 'dummy' document. This is also known as TMA00 and a button for this should appear seven days before your module starts. You may find your tutor asks you to do this as practice.

Submitting a TMA is quick and easy to do. Just remember to follow the guidance you'll be given on how to format and submit your file.

### 3.2.12 How is my practice assessed?

Practice assessors will assess your competence in practice and record their assessment in your PAD (practice assessment documentation). More information can be found in section 4 *Practice* experience and supervision.

### 3.2.13 How do I get feedback on my assignments?

Feedback will be obtained from various sources including feedback built into ICMA's, TMA feedback, feedback in group sessions (tutor and peers) where facilitated, practitioner feedback, and through script marker feedback on your EMAs. Feedback will ultimately continue to be steered towards building confidence in your performance and developing a deeper understanding of key concepts of nursing and its' related sciences when applied to practice.

Feedback will follow the OU standard process, with the ICMA's generating immediate feedback and all other work, except for the EMA, being marked by your tutor and moderated by the module team. If you submitted your TMA online, you'll receive an email telling you when it's available to download. We call this 'collecting' your marked assignment. Typically, you'll get it back within 10 working days from your submission deadline. This allows you ample time to understand and respond to the feedback. You will receive written differentiated feedback from your EMA at the end of the module. This feedback will be provided by your script marker.

To collect your TMA, you'll go back to the eTMA system. Here you should see your score for the TMA and a button to collect it. When you click 'collect' you'll be able to download your TMA and tutor feedback as a zip file which you'll need to save to your computer or device. When you open the file, you'll find your tutor's comments and feedback.

Do make sure that you collect your work and read all of the feedback – there is usually feedback on your TMA document as well as an attached form with a summary of the feedback. Don't just look at the mark, as the feedback you get is really important and will help you improve.

Assignments marked by module tutors are monitored to ensure a reasonable uniformity of marking standards and an adequate level of teaching comments.

### 3.2.14 What can I do if I am unhappy with my TMA result?

If you want to query the score awarded for any TMA (except for end-of-module TMAs), you must return the assignment to your tutor within 14 days of the date of return on the Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3), stating the grounds on which you're querying the score.

There is information and guidance on your [module results in the Help Centre](#).

## Section 4: Practice experience and supervision

Your practice experience will be supported and facilitated by the University of the West of England (UWE).

**Academic Personal Tutor (APT):** Every UWE Bristol student will be allocated to a personal tutor at the start of their programme. The student will be provided with opportunities to meet with their academic personal tutor regularly during their studies.

### 4.1 The importance of practice experience

As a student nurse, half your programme of study is based in practice or simulated learning, so that you are provided with opportunities to achieve the required standards of proficiency for admission to the register. Equal importance is given to theory and practice learning.

You must be supported to learn in practice and that will include you being supernumerary, which means you should not be counted as part of the staffing required to deliver safe and effective care in that setting.

#### 4.1.1 Why are practice experiences important?

The Standards for student supervision and assessment (SSSA) (NMC 2018) outline the requirements for effective practice learning and assessment.

There are three specific aspects to the SSSA to ensure students are provided with safe, effective and inclusive learning experiences. These include:

- 1) Effective practice learning
- 2) Supervision of students
- 3) Assessment of students and confirmation of proficiency

As well as observing what type of care is provided in each setting, you should be given the opportunity to learn and provide care across a range of different learning environments to enable you to meet learning outcomes and experience a variety of care situations, working with patients, service users and carers across the lifespan, in acute and community settings. This is important so that you are able to develop professionally, take part in the delivery of safe and effective care, and maintain the safety of patients and yourself at all times.

#### 4.1.2 What types of practice experiences are there?

Within the pre-registration programme you will have access to a range of learning opportunities to meet the required programme outcomes. This will include a number of hospital and community-based experiences in NHS, Private and within the voluntary and independent sector area. As well as the traditional placement experiences we have a number of unique placements, for example these may be in local prisons, general practice, care homes, hospices, forensic mental health units, child and adolescent mental health units, and special schools. Students from any field may be allocated to these areas in order to meet their required proficiencies, communication and relationship management skills or nursing procedures as required by the NMC.

**Adult Field:** In Year 1 of the programme adult nursing students may gain experiences in nursery placements, learning disability / mental health as well as field specific areas. In Year 2 and 3 learning opportunities will be made available to enable you to care for the expectant mother and newborn as well as adults across the age range with acute and long-term conditions in medical, surgical, high dependency and community settings.

Adult nursing students also need to meet a number of requirements related to guidance from the European Commission and further information will be given in your module handbook regarding these.

It is an NMC requirement that practice learning should provide you with experience of 24-hour and 7-day care and so you will be required to work a range of shift patterns. This will include some experiences of night duty for all students except those on their first practice experience in Year 1.

Your practice experiences will include working with other health and social care professionals, organisations, and agencies to ensure individualised care across the lifespan.

You will also have an opportunity to be involved in simulated care experiences, which is an artificial representation of real-world practice. You will be encouraged to reflect on your practice experiences and maintain a reflective journal.

Please be aware that for practice learning, students will be required to travel to the practice or placement areas.

#### 4.1.3 How will practice experiences be documented?

All students will have access to a Practice Assessment Document (PAD), where practice experiences and the achievement of proficiencies and learning outcomes will be documented.

The PAD is designed to support and guide you towards successfully achieving the criteria set out in the Future nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses (NMC 2018b) and Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes (NMC 2018d). You are given access to a PAD at the start of the academic year for each Part of the programme. The Part refers to the year of study for practice on the programme e.g. Part 1 is for Year 1

The PAD makes up a significant part of your overall programme assessment. It will need to be processed through formal University systems. Continuous assessment is an integral aspect of assessment in practice and you are expected to show evidence of consistent achievement. You should engage positively in all learning opportunities, take responsibility for your own learning and know how to access support.

You will work with and receive written feedback from a range of staff including Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors and you are required to reflect on your learning. You are responsible for raising concerns with a nominated person in the practice setting in a timely manner. You should also alert staff to any reasonable adjustments that may be required to support your learning. You should ensure you are familiar with your university assessment and submission processes for this document and contact the academic representative from your university or refer to your university's intranet if you require support or advice on specific university procedures.

The PAD has been developed to ensure that you are prepared to successfully meet the *Future Nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses* (NMC 2018b) at the point of registration.

The outcome statements have been designed by the NMC to apply across all four fields of nursing practice and all care settings (NMC 2018b) as registered nurses must be able to meet the person-centred, holistic needs of the people they encounter in their practice. The individuals you care for may be at any stage of their life and may have a range of mental, physical, cognitive or behavioral health challenges.

The annexes within the standards of proficiency also apply across all fields and demonstrate what registered nurses should be able to demonstrate at the point of registration. *The level of expertise and knowledge required for both annexes will vary dependent on the chosen field(s) of practice. Registered nurses must be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake these skills and procedures at an appropriate level for their intended field(s) of practice.*

You will have access to **confidential information** when in practice placements. The PAD should not contain any patient/service user/carer identifiable information. Contents must not be disclosed to any unauthorised person or removed, photocopied or used outside the placement or university.

People must be offered the opportunity to give and if required withdraw their informed consent to student participation in their care and staff in practice will provide guidance as required. Before approaching any patient/service user/carer for feedback you must discuss with your Practice Supervisor/Practice Assessor

who will facilitate consent.

### **Content of the PAD for each Part**

**Professional Values:** Professional Values reflect a number of proficiency statements and are captured under the 4 sections of The Code (NMC 2018a). All must be achieved by the end of each placement. As the student you are required to select one example from your practice on each placement to demonstrate how you practice within The Code. Confidentiality in relation to people receiving care and service providers should be maintained. For each placement a different area of The Code should be selected to reflect on.

All professional values must be achieved in all placements. If any have not been met, you will be given one further opportunity and be given additional support and guidance to achieve them. If you are unsuccessful in achieving these on a second occasion within the Part this may affect your progression and you may be referred to the fitness for practice panel.

**Proficiencies:** These reflect aspects of the 7 Platforms, communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures (NMC 2018b). These can be assessed in a range of placements but must be achieved at least once by the end of the Part. Assessment of proficiencies are undertaken across the Part. These can be assessed in a range of placements. If a proficiency is assessed as achieved early in the Part it is expected that you maintain that level of competence and could be re-assessed in subsequent placements during the Part. This is underpinned by Professional Value 8.

To support you progressing effectively through the programme and in utilising the valuable opportunities available across a range of placements certain proficiencies have been identified that can be met in Part 2 **OR** Part 3 of the programme. These are listed in the Part 2 and Part 3 documents and the Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR). The Practice Assessor needs to complete this at the end of Part 2 and Part 3. Any proficiencies not met in Part 2 are then identified as you needing to achieve these in Part 3.

**Episodes of Care:** These holistic assessment(s) facilitates and demonstrates your progress and must be achieved by the end of the Part. You and your Practice Assessor should identify the appropriate placement and episode of care to complete this assessment.

- Part 1 - There is one episode of care that you need to be assessed on by your Practice Assessor, however you are encouraged to complete one as a formative assessment and this can be undertaken with your Practice Supervisor.

This episode of direct care involves meeting the needs of an individual person receiving care.

- Part 2 - There are two episodes of care in part 2 to facilitate the development of knowledge and skills related to your field of practice.

Episode 1 – this involves the care of a group of people receiving care or an individual with complex care needs. Episode 2 - this involves the care of a group of people receiving care with increasingly complex health and social care needs.

There is no additional paperwork to support the formative assessment of either episodes of care though you are encouraged to print off a copy to facilitate your development.

- Part 3 - There are two episodes of care in part 2 to facilitate the development and consolidation of knowledge and skills related to your field of practice.

Episode 1 - Supervising and teaching a junior learner in practice, based on the delivery of direct person-centred care. Episode 2 - organisation and management of care for a group/caseload of people with complex care covering all seven platforms. There is no additional paperwork to support the formative assessment of either episodes of care though you are encouraged to print off a copy to facilitate your development.

**Medicines Management:** There is one assessment included in each Part and each must be achieved by the end of the Part. You and your Practice Assessor should identify the appropriate placement to complete this



assessment. By the end of Part 3 you should be consolidating your knowledge, skills and competence in relation to the safe administration of medicines within the required regulatory frameworks relating to *Future Nurse* (NMC 2018b) *The Code*, (NMC 2018a) and *A Competency Framework for all Prescribers* (The Royal Pharmaceutical Society 2016).

**Patient/Service User/Carer Feedback Form:** Feedback will be sought in relation to how you have cared for the person receiving care. This is not formally assessed but will make an important contribution to your overall feedback.

**Peer feedback:** These records can be completed by your peers i.e. other students who have worked alongside you or have had the opportunity to discuss your learning needs with you. If you have facilitated a teaching session on placement you can use this form to obtain feedback.

**Recording Additional Experiences and Feedback:** There are additional pages for you to record reflections on your own learning and pages to record communication and additional feedback from all those supporting learning and assessment.

**Ongoing Achievement Record:** The Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR) is a separate document that summarises your achievements in each placement and with the main document provides a comprehensive record of your professional development and performance in practice. You are responsible for the safekeeping and maintenance of the PAD. It should be available to your Practice Supervisor, Practice Assessor and Academic Assessor at all times when you are in placement together with the OAR.

**Criteria for Assessment in Practice:** Within the PAD three key statements have been developed to reflect the level of performance that is required of you to demonstrate at the end of each Part as well as the level of assistance that may be required at each stage. By the end of the Part you should be practising independently, competently and confidently. The following three levels of performance are to be met by the end of each Part:

<b>By the end of Part 1</b>	Guided Participation in care and performing with increasing confidence and competence
<b>By the end of Part 2</b>	Active participation in care with minimal guidance and performing with increased confidence and competence
<b>By the end of Part 3</b>	Practicing independently with minimal supervision and leading and coordinating care with confidence

In addition to achieving the required level of performance at the end of each Part you will be assessed against a specified set of criteria related to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for each component of assessment within the PAD. These criteria are used to assess you on different placements across the year as you work towards the overall performance level to be achieved by the end of the Part.

If your performance gives cause for concern at the mid-point interview, feedback must be given and an action plan written to enable you to address this prior to the final interview. The Practice Assessor must communicate with and involve your nominated Academic Assessor in this process.

Within the PAD there are guidelines relating to how the assessment is managed within each university, and you should ensure that you have read and understood these. You should take responsibility for your own learning and know how to access support.

You will also need to record the number of hours spent in areas of practice, as well as any time you take as sickness absence.

#### 4.1.4 Effective Practice Learning

The Allocation to placements is managed by the placements team, who liaise directly with the clinical placement managers/education leads within the various organisations regarding available placement capacity and opportunities.

Placements are planned in advance to ensure you have a range of health and social care experiences across hospital, community and primary care, both in the NHS and across the private, voluntary and independent sector to meet the required programme outcomes.

The information regarding your allocation that is sent to the individual areas clearly indicates your level/year so that the placement area can identify the most appropriate person to supervise and assess you and plan appropriate learning opportunities in advance.

Some key principles outlined in the SSSA are:

- There is a nominated person for each practice setting to actively support students and address student concerns
- All students on an NMC approved programme are supervised while learning in practice
- There is sufficient coordination and continuity of support and supervision of students to ensure safe and effective learning experiences
- All students on an NMC approved programme are supervised in practice by NMC registered nurses and midwives, and other registered healthcare professionals

All of these areas have been explored with our partner organisations to ensure they are met and ongoing support from the academic team ensures they continue to be in place.

As a student in practice you work in a **supernumerary** capacity. According to the NMC standards this means that you '*must be supported to learn without being counted as part of the staffing required for safe and effective care in that setting*' (NMC 2018c). You are however still required to contribute to care to promote your learning and development and this contribution will increase over time.

#### 4.1.5 How can I make the most of every practice experience?

It is important to prepare ahead for your practice experiences. Make sure you find out exactly where the practice experience is and that you know how to get there so that you are on time for your shifts.

Take time to find out what your practice experience can offer you – for example, is it a hospital ward that specialises in a particular type of surgical care for patients? If so, do you need to revise your understanding of anatomy to make sure you can make sense of the care being provided? Or is it a practice setting that supports young people with profound learning disability? What preparation do you feel you need? Or will you be meeting community nursing colleagues? What arrangements do you need to agree with them on where to meet and do you know what the policy on lone working is? Will you be able to meet other members of the community team, such as the health visitor, the community midwife, the chiropodist and occupational therapist, for example?

Thinking about what your practice experience can offer you in terms of learning opportunities is well worth the effort, because you can start to plan your learning and map that against the requirements of the PAD. It is important that you have an induction to each practice area you work in, so that you know about hours of working, what to do in an emergency, and what to do should you be ill and unable to attend, for example.

Keeping a record of your practice experiences is important, not only as a record of your achievements which you will need to complete your PAD, but also as a personal reflection to demonstrate your growth and development as a safe and accountable practitioner.

## 4.2 Supervision and assessment in practice

### 4.2.1 Why is supervision of practice so important?

There is a strong emphasis in your programme, on developing professional skills and proficiencies, particularly in the practice modules. Each module will have a single component assessment strategy comprising a series of assessment tasks, which are aligned with learning outcomes and develop different skills. In each practice learning module, students must successfully complete a range of skills and proficiencies evidenced within the PAD, developed under supervision and assessed by a named practice assessor, on Pass/Fail basis. Other compulsory NMC components for each practice learning module are completion of required practice learning hours and confirmation of good health and good character.

### 4.2.2 Who supervises and assesses me in practice?

**The key roles for supporting supervision and assessment in practice are the:**

- Practice Supervisor (PS)
- Practice Assessor (PA)
- Academic Assessor (AA)

Practice Supervisors, Practice Assessors and Academic Assessors have an important role in supporting and guiding you through your learning experience. This includes facilitating any reasonable adjustments the student may require to achieve the maximum benefit from the placement.

As well as undertaking the required assessments, the role of the Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor also includes identifying relevant learning opportunities and creating learning and development plans with you.

A brief outline of these roles is included here but please also refer to your guide to the PAD and specific guidance in the PAD.

**Practice Supervisors (PS)** are registered nurses or midwives or registered health and social care professionals. They have current knowledge and experience and are appropriately prepared for the role. They have responsibility to ensure learning opportunities are facilitated, they contribute to assessment, record regular feedback and seek feedback from other supervisors. They will have received preparation for the role and will continue to receive ongoing support and development.

**Practice Assessors (PA)** are registered nurses or midwives with current knowledge and expertise and are appropriately prepared for the role. The PA conducts assessments informed by feedback from practice supervisors, makes and records objective decisions drawing on records, observations, your reflection and other resources. The PA must periodically observe your practice and gather feedback from practice supervisors and other relevant people. This may equate to approximately one day per week. The PA will have scheduled communication with academic assessors at relevant points. They will have received preparation for the role and will continue to receive ongoing support and development.

**Academic Assessors (AA)** are registered nurses or midwives and are nominated for each Part of the programme and are appropriately prepared for the role, this nominated academic will change each year. The AA will have scheduled communication and work in partnership with your PA to evaluate and recommend your progression for each part of the programme. They will have received preparation for the role and will continue to receive ongoing support and development.

It is important that you have a practice supervisor available to you whenever you are in a practice learning environment. All nurses and midwives in any practice learning environment should be able to act as a role model and practice supervisor. Practice supervisors must be registered with a professional regulator such as the NMC, GMC or HCPC. Health and social care professionals who are not registered with a professional regulator cannot be practice supervisors. However, those health and social care professionals who are not registered with a professional regulator but are working in a practice learning environment, such as phlebotomists or teachers (in a primary or secondary school) may also contribute

to your education, depending on the role they play. There may be a particular skill they have, or they may have experience within that area that would be useful for you to be aware of and learn from.

#### 4.2.3 Who assesses me in practice?

Practice assessors are registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates, who assess your practice learning. They will have been prepared for their role and have current knowledge and experience relevant for the programme you are studying, although they do not necessarily have to be registered in the same field of practice as the one you will be studying for.

Practice assessors can be assigned to you for a placement or a series of placements, or for the whole of an academic year, but they cannot be your assessor throughout your whole programme.

#### 4.2.4 What do practice assessors do?

Practice assessors assess and confirm your achievement of practice learning in a placement or series of placements. They do not necessarily have to assess you in each practice setting you experience, but assess your overall performance, taking account of whether or not relevant proficiencies and programme outcomes have been achieved, and if you are displaying the required values of the nursing profession. Your nominated practice assessor will communicate with your practice supervisors and also with your nominated academic assessor, who makes a recommendation about your progression throughout the programme.

#### 4.2.5 What is an academic assessor?

The Open University provides you with an academic assessor. Academic assessors collate and confirm student achievement in the academic environment for each part of the programme. They work with your nominated practice assessor to make recommendations for progression for each student they are assigned to. This means that you will be visited by your academic assessor at the beginning of your practice experience to ensure you have learning opportunities available and appropriate supervision and support. They will make a further visit mid-way through your practice learning to ensure progress is being made, and a final visit will be made on completion of the practice

experience to work with the practice assessor, bringing together all results of academic work as well as progress in practice, to confirm that you should progress to the next part of the programme, or to confirm that you have not achieved and cannot progress to the next part of the programme.

#### 4.2.6 What happens if I don't succeed?

It is unlikely that you would be unaware that you are not making progress in practice or work-based learning as you should be in regular communication with your practice supervisors, your practice assessor and your academic assessor. If you appear not to be making progress, the reasons for this will be explored and remedial action put in place once identified. This may include the development of an action plan with specified learning opportunities.

Your academic assessor must explain the basis on which any decision not to recommend progression is being made and you will have an opportunity to contest the decision, as with any other academic result, based on the process used to achieve the result, rather than the actual result itself.

## Section 5: Help and Support available while you study

### 5.1 How will I be supported?

#### 5.1.1 Who will support me throughout the programme?

Support for your theory-based and practice-based learning is provided by a range of different people. You will be able to access the library and the student support team. There are also a variety of support services that you can access from your student home page such as the IT helpdesk.

#### 5.1.2 Who are my module tutors?

Module tutors are part-time lecturers appointed for their module-specific expertise. They will steer your learning through the module materials, encourage you to keep on track according to the module study planner, facilitate tutorials and moderate online forums, provide study skills support and development, advise on writing assignments, and assess and provide detailed constructive feedback on each assignment.

You should contact your module tutor if you have any module-specific queries or concerns relating to your theory-based learning.

#### 5.1.3 Who are my academic assessors?

**Academic Assessors (AA)** are registered nurses or midwives and are nominated for each Part of the programme and are appropriately prepared for the role. The AA will have scheduled communication and work in partnership with your PA to evaluate and recommend your progression for each part of the programme. They will have received preparation for the role and will continue to receive ongoing support and development.

You should contact your academic assessor if you have any queries or concerns relating to your practice learning, or if you have personal problems that are affecting (or may affect) your progress on a practice-based module. You are required to send to your academic assessor information regarding your practice learning every month.

#### 5.1.4 Who is my Personal Tutor?

Every UWE practice based student will be allocated to a personal tutor at the start of their programme. The student will be provided with opportunities to meet with their academic personal tutor during the course of their studies. One of the UWE based academic team will be your nominated personal tutor. This key contact will be an additional source of support, advice and be able to provide academic references during as well as after the completion of the programme (for up to 36 months).

### 5.1.5 Where do I go for advice?

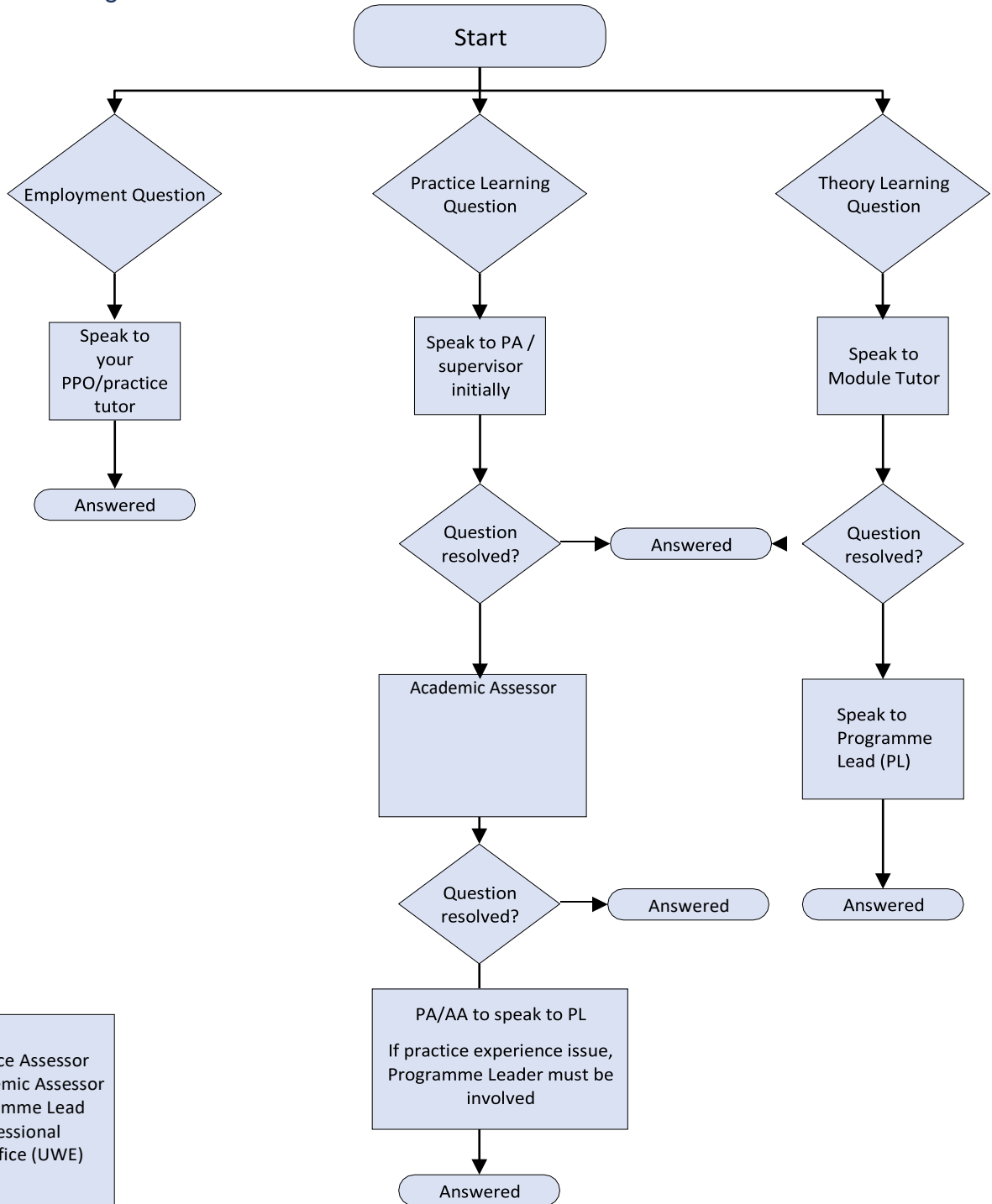


Figure 2 Flowchart for further advice

You can also access support from the Student Support Team, library services and the computing help desk if your query pertains to continuing study or IT. Please see below:

### 5.1.6 Where do I go for help with writing essays and referencing?

Many students are anxious about writing essays and referencing. [The Help centre](#) provides excellent information including note taking, preparing for assignments, revising for exams and referencing.

Your module tutor will give you written feedback on your TMA which will help you develop your study skills. If required, additional support sessions can be organised. It is important to keep in contact with your tutor and speak to them if you have any concerns. There is lots of help and support available to you.

### 5.1.7 How do I access the library and search for articles?

You can access the library from [StudentHome](#). You have access to a wide range of online academic resources offered by OU library. There is also lots of useful information and support on the library webpage including: Referencing guidelines, finding and using library resources, how to use libraries near where you live and assistance with using the library resources.

The library staff can also be contacted by telephone, email and chat 24hrs a day. You will find the contact information in your contacts in StudentHome.

### 5.1.8 Where do I find help with computer issues?

Computing Help provides you with information and support including: computing tips and techniques, how to overcome computer issues, access to study skills online, help using OU systems including Adobe connect online rooms, types of equipment and software you need to study and accessibility information.

The Computing Helpdesk can be contacted by telephone, email or chat. You will find the contact information in your contacts in StudentHome.

IT helpdesk –  
09:00 - 21:30 Monday - Friday  
09:00 - 17:00 Saturday - Sunday  
10:00 – 16:00 most Bank Holidays

### 5.1.9 What help can the Student Support Team provide?

The Student Support Team (SST) are based in Nottingham and are aligned to our School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care. They are aware of the different programmes that we offer. Your Student Support Team works with your tutors to provide information, administrative support and specialist advice to students on a wide range of issues. Your module tutor and academic assessor are your first point of contact for any queries directly related to the content of your module, including assignments and tutorials and practice placements.

In the SST there are student recruitment advisors, senior advisors and education advisors. Advisors engage with both new enquirers and existing students answering calls and emails and referring on to the faculty, e.g. staff tutors and or senior advisors and education advisors as required. Senior advisors can help with queries about study issues, or queries about EMAs or exams, or changing study intentions including deferring a module but this must also be discussed with your Programme Leader.

In some cases, you may have a complex study history and will need more in-depth guidance, in which case you will be referred on to an Education Advisor within the SST. The SST also send out messages to students at specific points on their module or qualification, for example reminders, prompts and where to seek guidance on their studies.

The student support team can be contacted via your StudentHome page, click on the link and you can fill out an online contact form outlining your query, or you can phone them on 01908 541070. They are open 08:00 - 20:00 Monday – Friday and 09:00 - 17:00 on Saturday.



### 5.1.10 What help is available if I have a disability?

If you have a disability of any kind, you may be eligible for additional support or reasonable adjustments to support you in your studies. You can access information about disability support through the Help Centre link on your StudentHome page. Information is available on who can get disability support and the reasonable adjustments available through the Open University via [The Help Centre](#). There are also specific areas of information on mental health difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, being blind or partially sighted, being deaf or hard of hearing, limited mobility, autistic spectrum, pain or fatigue, and specific information for international students. If you cannot find the information you need on this part of the website, you can also contact the Student Support Team, following the link from your StudentHome page, either by leaving a web message or making a telephone call to one of the advisers.

### 5.1.11 What do I do if I am sick and cannot attend my placement?

You should inform your placement office and programme leader for practice as soon as possible, as well as your current placement. You should also let your programme leader for practice know when you are returning to work. The placement office is informed by contacting the PPO: <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/faculties-and-departments/practice-support-net/professional-practice-contacts>. Also, make sure all episodes of sickness or other reasons for absence are identified on your record of hours section of the electronic PAD.

### 5.1.12 What do I do if I think I cannot complete my assessments?

We recognise that life events can occur which affect your studies. These may be related to bereavement, illness, finance, caring responsibilities, pregnancy and many others. There is lots of support available to you. You should inform your module tutor as soon as possible and talk to the student support team. The student support team can help you think through your options. You may find it helpful to write down some questions before getting in touch with them. If you don't want to call you can always email. You can find their contact details in your StudentHome.

### 5.1.13 What do I do if I decide the programme is not for me and I need to leave, or if I need to take sickness or maternity leave?

It is important that you let your Programme Leader and the staff tutor in your locality know as soon as possible if you think you want to leave the programme. They will discuss options that may be available to you, such as taking a break in learning or postponing your studies. It is also important that your placement is informed as soon as possible and your AA may well help you with that.

Information about changing your study plans including deferring or withdrawing your modules is available on the Help Centre in your StudentHome, but it is essential that you speak to your staff tutor in the first instance.

## 5.2 Rights and Responsibilities

### 5.2.1 What are my rights and responsibilities as a student?

As an OU student, you can expect that all matters will be dealt with in accordance with OU policies and procedures. The OU has several policies relating to students, including computer use, social networking, academic conduct, bullying, harassment and data protection. Please ensure that you are familiar with these.

The OU Student Charter sets out a summary of what you can expect of the OU and what the OU expects from you. As a student of the OU, you are expected to act in accordance with this charter.

#### 5.2.1.1 The NMC standards and student conduct

As a nursing student you need to comply with the NMC Code. Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates (2018). You must also ensure you are familiar with the NMC social media guidance, which is underpinned by the Code. This covers the need to use social media and social networking sites responsibly

Behaving with professional integrity is required by the NMC extends to your activities as an OU on-line learner. This means that we expect your conduct and communication during teaching activities including on forums to remain professional and collegiate at all times. In the event that you communicate in a manner that causes concern to the AL, this will be referred to the ST (and Module Chair) for further investigation and may require a full investigation to take place. Following this, the matter is referred to the co-Qualification Directors and a decision will be made whether to refer the incident to a Fitness to Practice panel for review. It is important that you recognise that questions regarding your professional integrity are taken seriously and you may be expelled from the qualification, if the incident is serious enough and is found to be in breach of the NMC code (2018).



Furthermore, you must follow the NMC guidance on Raising concerns: Guidance for nurses, midwives and nursing associates.

### 5.2.2 How do I make a complaint?

It is anticipated that any concerns you have can be addressed through informal discussion with members of the team supporting your learning. However, should you wish to make a formal complaint or appeal, you will find information and guidance on this in the OU [Complaints and appeals procedure](#).

All complaints are taken seriously; every complaint will be fully investigated, and you will be kept informed of progress throughout.

If you wish to make a specific complaint about your practice area or are concerned about any aspect of patient care please discuss with your Ward Manager, Link Lecturer or Personal Tutor as appropriate who will advise you further on the process to follow. Alternatively please email your Programme Leader. A copy of the 'raising concerns / complaints process' is included in your 'Essential Guide' and reflects the NMC guidance "*Raising concerns: Guidance for nurses midwives and nursing associates*" which was published in 2013 and updated in December 2018.

UWE

Practice Support Line/ PPO

<https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/faculties-and-departments/practice-support-net/professional-practice-contacts>

## 5.3 Academic Conduct

### 5.3.1 What is plagiarism

Plagiarism is using, without acknowledgement, someone else's ideas or work as your own. Developing your skills in referencing will help you avoid plagiarism.

It is important to understand that if you do not acknowledge fully the sources that have contributed to and informed your work you are misrepresenting your knowledge and abilities. Since this may give you an unfair academic advantage in assessment it is considered to be academic misconduct.

There is lots of help and support on the library services website to [develop your skills in referencing](#).

### 5.3.2 What is the Assessment policy and academic regulations?

Your learning will be assessed throughout the qualification (see Sections 3 & 4).

The general regulations and processes concerning assessment in the OU can be found in the [Help Centre](#)

You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the [Student Policies and Regulations](#) in particular those show below:

[Assessment Handbook](#)

[Code of practice for student assessment](#)

[Code of practice for student discipline](#)

[Changing your study plans policy \(deferrals, withdrawals and cancellation\)](#)

[Policy on plagiarism](#)

You will have noted that the link provided above is part of your StudentHome web page. Spend time navigating this site to explore what is included that might be useful for you. The information is designed to be both accessible and practical, and we anticipate you will make a lot of use of this throughout your studies.

As a nursing student you will also have professional requirements you must adhere to. You will find information about this in section 6.

## 5.4 Quality assurance of your student experience

### 5.4.1 How is my programme quality assured?

The assessment of learning outcomes provides a framework for your module tutor to assess each Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) and provide feedback to facilitate your progression. Grading and feedback is monitored to assure that you are assessed equitably with other students. TMAs and feedback are monitored by experienced module team academics. External examiners are asked to confirm that the programme meets the required standards and that these are comparable to others found in other higher education institutes. Module tutors are mostly NMC registrants, many work part time for the Open University as many work in other universities or continue to work in practice. Module Tutors (Associate Lecturers ALs) are subject to observation of their tuition and samples of their marking are regularly monitored.

### 5.4.2 Assuring the quality of practice learning

All practice areas must meet statutory and professional body requirements and there is continued emphasis on improving and developing these to ensure that:

- You are provided with relevant learning opportunities – to include a range of opportunities for you to learn with and from other health care professionals.
- Learning opportunities are of a good quality and learning outcomes are achievable
- You are given adequate support and supervision from suitably qualified practitioners
- You are provided with continuous feedback on your performance

Staff within the School of Health and Education work in partnership with practice placement providers to ensure that the practice learning environment is conducive to meeting the individual learning needs of the student and a robust process of quality monitoring and enhancement of the learning environment is in place. This process is continuous though does require us to formally visit each practice area and undertake a review of the learning environment every two years as a minimum.

In order to review the consistency and reliability of your practice assessments a number of processes are in place. This includes regular updates for practice assessors, practice supervisors and support from Link Lecturers as well as visits from the External Examiner. In addition to these a specific assessment panel that comprises both clinical and academic members of staff is convened 3 times a year to review the assessment processes and documentation. This is known as the Quality Monitoring Panel for Practice Assessments (QMPPA).

Evaluating your practice experience will also aid us in monitoring and enhancing the learning environment. In order to ensure the quality of the placement learning environment we ask you as students to provide us with feedback. You will be given opportunities within the placement organisations to provide ongoing feedback whilst on placement and you will also be required to complete a placement evaluation form on return to the university. The feedback will be monitored and managed accordingly and will also feed into the quality review process.

This is a process of constructive feedback and not a complaints procedure. If you wish to make a complaint about your practice area or identify poor practice please discuss with your Academic Assessor or Personal Tutor as appropriate who will advise you further on the process to follow. Alternatively, please contact the PPO via: <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/about/faculties-and-departments/practice-support-net/professional-practice-contacts> A copy of the complaints process is available online for all staff via the mentor website and a copy included in your 'Essential Guide'. This process also outlines the actions you should take to escalate concerns about patient / client care.

Practice consolidation events post practice periods are organised to aid review, reflection and consolidation of learning.

**As a student you have a key role in supporting your supervision and assessment in practice and in enhancing the learning environment and can do this by:**

- Demonstrating high standards of professional conduct at all times and be able to articulate the underpinning values of The Code (NMC, 2018a)
- Being prepared for and have a sound understanding of the proficiencies/skills you need to achieve
- Contacting the area in advance to ensure you are familiar with the location and your allocated duties
- Being aware of the name of the person you should speak to in the practice area if you have concerns
- Actively seeking out practice supervisors to support your learning and encourage feedback to be recorded in your assessment document
- Knowing the name of your nominated Practice Assessor and your Academic Assessor from the beginning of the placement
- Having an understanding of the support services available both within the practice area and via the university whilst in practice (information will be available on your programme pages on UniHub)
- Reflecting regularly on your learning in practice and support the learning of others
- Raising concerns promptly and seeking support as required
- Providing feedback on your learning experience both in the placement area and on return to the university to support monitoring and enhancement of the learning environment

## Section 6: Professional issues

### 6.1 Role transition

#### 6.1.1 What are the funding options available for the BSc Nursing programme?

You will be fee paying (England). The core BSc (Hons) Nursing programme is the same regardless of funding but the Apprenticeship Standard imposes some additional requirements.

#### 6.1.2 How can I ensure my supernumerary hours are recognised?

When you are completing your supernumerary practice hours as a student nurse, it is important to stay focused on meeting your learning needs and so ensuring you meet the NMC's practice requirements. Undertaking fundamental nursing care is a core component of nursing, however, if you are asked to perform routine tasks that are normally part of your employee role on a regular basis, you will need to remind colleagues politely that you are there as a student and have specific learning needs to fulfil.

#### 6.1.3 Can I use my existing skills on the degree programme?

If you are a fee paying/sponsored student please note that, during your supernumerary practice hours, if you are asked to undertake nursing procedures and/or apply specific skills that you normally undertake in your healthcare assistant role, you must ensure that your practice area permits the procedure or skill to be undertaken by nursing students. Regardless of the skills and functions you are required to utilise within your employment, clinical interventions such as phlebotomy, cannulation, taking ECGs and monitoring blood glucose levels need to be fully assessed *within the programme* to demonstrate the level of proficiency required.

#### 6.1.4 Do I need to wear a uniform?

In order that you can be recognised as an OU student when in placements, the OU logo is embroidered onto the uniforms provided and a name badge supplied with the OU and UWE logos on. It is important that you comply with local policy with regard to appropriate dress and it is your responsibility to seek out this information prior to accessing practice experiences outside of your core practice-base and ensure you comply with it.

## 6.2 Confidentiality

### 6.2.1 How can ensure patient/service user confidentiality is maintained?

You must ensure that all aspects of your work with patients and service users respects the need for confidentiality at all times. You will need to make sure that the content of your written work is presented in a manner which ensures confidentiality for patients, service users and carers, and other members of staff. Failing to do this is a breach of professional guidance on conduct and ethics. You should remove anything that could be used to identify a service user. The real name and identity of a patient, service user or carer and any staff member should always be anonymised by the use of pseudonyms, including on your PAD.

You will need to make a professional judgement as to what information can be shared. Any one issue should not normally identify a person or situation; however, you should be careful if you include a number of issues which might lead to the service user in question being identified. You should remember some individual issues may need to be discussed to show how they are addressing difference, for example gender or type of location.

[Guidance on maintaining confidentiality](#) is contained in the module assessment guidance. For further clarification please discuss with your Academic Assessor, or your module tutor for practice modules. If in doubt – leave it out!



## 6.3 Safeguarding, Safe Practice and Raising Concerns

### 6.3.1 What are my responsibilities toward safe practice?

It is the responsibility of every practitioner, including students, to ensure the wellbeing of patients is protected and action taken if we have any concerns about care practices and/ or interventions.

In the context of the practice experience provider's and your obligations to service users and carers you must:

- Only provide care to service users agreed with your practice supervisor
- In emergency situations provide care to a service user whose health status has changed only within the parameters of your competence and confidence
- Inform your practice supervisor immediately in non-emergency situations in which the health status of the service user has changed
- Raise the alarm or contact the emergency services in situations in which you are unsure about the 'emergency' status of the situation
- Raise the alarm or contact the emergency services as a priority in emergency situations outside of your sphere of competence/confidence.

### 6.3.2 What should I do if I have a concern about care?

The Care Act (2014) ensures safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The NHS Constitution makes it clear that it is the duty of all NHS workers, including students, to report any concerns they have about practice or any mistreatment of patients/ service users receiving care from the health service.

Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of those in your care means these people should not be exposed to abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect and the different circumstances in which they take place can take many forms. The NMC has developed [guidance for students about raising concerns](#) (NMC 2019).

You therefore have an obligation to report any concerns you have about your own or others' practice to your practice supervisor/practice assessor and academic assessor, following the process in the flow chart without delay. Both the OU and its partners must investigate any concerns shared about practice incidents.

UWE's University Safeguarding Policy and Procedure ensures robust systems are in place to report and promptly respond should you have concerns about the wellbeing or safety of service users, yourself, the public or the learning environment. Safeguarding is part of the student's preparation for clinical practice and has been developed with stakeholder and learner involvement. Details of this policy can be accessed via the UWE web. This information is situated on the university's practice support net (PS Net). All safeguarding concerns are logged with the student policy team who maintain a database to allow tracking of progress against actions agreed in response to the concern. The Head of School is rapidly notified of any safeguarding concern and the university's safeguarding officer provides monthly reports to the HOD for oversight and scrutiny. In addition, the student policy team will alert the programme lead and, where appropriate, other relevant senior members of staff.



### 6.3.3 Where can I find out more about raising concerns?

National resources can be found using the links below.

NHS Health Education England have produced a video which [provides guidance on raising concerns about patient safety](#).

The NMC (2019) [Raising concerns: guidance for midwives and nurses](#) also applies to nursing and midwifery students.

Please be aware that there may be local or nation specific requirements and you will be informed about these resources at your programme briefing sessions and during your programme.

### 6.3.4 Equipment and medicines safety?

The NHS Improvement website provides regular updates about any possible issues relating to equipment and/or medicines which may compromise the safety of patients. These alerts may not always apply to every Trust or care setting, but in order to be sure, you should visit the site regularly to check on all updates and identify any which may be relevant to your setting and need to be actioned.

### 6.3.5 Where can I find guidance on giving medicines and what is 'prescribing ready'?

In the Future Nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses (NMC 2018) the NMC use the term 'prescribing ready' to describe how all student nurses will be prepared by their education programme for medicine management. This term means that student nurses will receive enhanced theoretical knowledge of pharmacology, pharmacokinetics and medicines management and dependent on locality may be ready to commence an education programme leading to a prescribing qualification within a year of registration with the NMC as a registered nurse. Nurses graduating from a Future Nurse programme will not be qualified to prescribe at the end of their degree programme. All nurses are still required to complete a post registration prescribing qualification.

Whatever level of the programme you have reached, the administration of medicines to clients must always be underpinned by the guidance published in January 2019. It has been co-produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and provides principles-based guidance to ensure the safe administration of medicines by healthcare professionals.

Guidance is available on the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society medicines optimisation hub](#).

You need to carefully read this guidance and ensure that you understand your existing role as a nursing student as well as your future role as a registered nurse with respect to the safe administration of medicines. You must also be familiar with the medicines management policies of any healthcare providers where you gain practice learning experiences.

The NMC provide further information on [medicines management](#).

## 6.4 Good Health and Character and Fitness to Practice

### 6.4.1 What does it mean to be, “of good health and good character”?

As a student on a professional nursing qualification, you are expected to maintain professional standards of practice and behaviour in accordance with [The Code \(NMC 2018\)](#).

For further information about professional standards and guidance go to the [NMC website](#).

The OU is required by the NMC to assure itself that students completing an NMC approved qualification leading to registration with the NMC are of good character and good health and therefore fit to practise as a registered nurse (NMC, 2019). A fitness to practise issue is any possible misconduct, lack of competence and/or a health/ disability matter that could place at risk the health and wellbeing of the public or calls your integrity into question.

The overriding purpose of the NMC’s Fitness to Practise Review Process is to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. It is vital you understand the importance of good health and good character in relation to your ability (conduct and character) and capacity (health and disability) to study the pre-registration nursing qualification. Please read the [guidance on health and character \(NMC 2019\)](#)

On application you must declare any convictions or cautions within the application form; these are dealt with through an Applicant Suitability Process managed by the programme managers. Any changes to your health and character during the programme must be reported to your Programme Leader so that support can be put in place and appropriate action can be taken. If, at any time during the module, you or others raise concerns about your health and/or character, which include any investigation about your conduct, or any team/group you are a part of, you must contact your Programme Leader immediately by email and complete the student self-declaration of health and character form (website version) found on the University website.

You should also provide a statement explaining the concern. Failure to comply with this requirement could place successful completion of your qualification at risk. To ensure we respond appropriately to concerns about a student’s fitness to practise, we apply the Open University’s [Fitness to Practise \(FtP\) Procedure](#) which is initiated through the student management process.

### 6.4.2 When am I required to use the Declaration of Health and Good Character form?

Good health and character are fundamental values of professional nursing with the implication that practitioners have insight into knowing what is right or important. You will be required to complete this declaration on entry to the programme, at each progression point, before returning to the programme after a period of interruption of study, prior to entry to the NMC register and at revalidation points throughout your nursing career. The [NMC Code](#) (2018) outlines expected standards of practice and behaviour.

If at any time during your studies:

- Your health deteriorates
- You or anyone else has any concern about your health
- You commit a criminal offence
- You or anyone else has any concerns about your conduct

→ **You must self-declare these immediately to the university.**

Self-declaration of a change in health or conduct will not necessarily preclude you from continuing your studies but will enable a risk assessment to be carried out in order to maintain public safety and ensure

your wellbeing is protected. It is your responsibility to seek advice from your Programme Leader and you will be required to complete the self-declaration of health and character form available from your practice module's website. This is critical because one of the NMC's requirements on completion of the qualification is seeking a confirmation statement that you are of sufficiently good health and good character to practise safely. If your academic assessor is not available, you must email the Programme Leader or your staff tutor for advice.

To ensure we respond appropriately to concerns about a student's fitness to practise, we apply the Open University's Fitness to Practise (FtP) Procedure. At all times the safety of the public and practitioners, including students, is of paramount importance.

These personal and professional expectations of your behaviour will continue for the rest of your career after you enter the NMC professional register as a qualified nurse.

Remember it is always safer to ask for advice than engage in an activity that might leave you or a service user in a vulnerable position, due to misunderstanding or ignorance.

### 6.4.3 What happens if there is a complaint about my practice?

If a complaint is made about you whilst you are in your nursing student role or a complaint involves a time period during which you were in this role, you should:

- 1) Inform your Programme Leader as soon as possible and at least within **24 hours** of being made aware of the complaint
- 2) Comply with the requirements of the healthcare provider organisation's policy/ procedure relating to complaints
- 3) Be aware that if, in investigating the complaint, it is determined that your actions or omissions suggest that you may be unfit to practise, the university will follow its own Fitness to Practise procedure and Code of Practice for student discipline.

Your Programme Leader will offer you advice and support in relation to responding to the complaint. Your Programme Leader will also alert the relevant staff tutor responsible for the nursing programme in the healthcare provider organisation.

## 6.5 Communication

### 6.5.1 To whom am I required to send records of my placement hours?

Representing a values-based profession, the programme aims to enhance personal development and nurture the values and behaviours required for professional and compassionate care.

Communication and interactions with others are fundamental to this vision and throughout the programme you will be expected to demonstrate this by your commitment to responding to any communication sent to you by staff supporting you from both partner Universities and ensuring regular communication with your Academic Assessor will be essential during the Placements.

### 6.5.2 What do I need to do if I'm sick and cannot attend my placement?

All sick time taken will need to be reported to your placement supervisor and the Academic Assessor, the latter may be through contacting the Practice/Placement Office. Return from sick leave also needs to be reported in a similar way so that any outstanding placement hours can be made up. Making up of hours in practice will be discussed on your induction day.

If you have/develop a health condition whilst on the programme which may impact on your performance and/or delivery of safe effective care, you must advise your Programme Leader or Academic Assessor so that a risk assessment can be carried out.

## 6.6 Lone working

### 6.6.1 What do I need to do if working alone?

There may be times when working in community settings for example, escorting patients, during 1:1 consultation or collecting or leaving buildings at night, that you may be required to work alone. Any lone worker can be vulnerable to physical or verbal abuse and should ensure they protect their personal safety. Healthcare practice settings have a responsibility to keep employees and students placed with them safe, identify and manage risks to lone workers. You will be required to follow relevant policies and procedures, attend all mandatory training and report incidents to reduce or eliminate risks.

The following minimum standards of safety must be in place prior to agreement being reached that you may practise alone:

- Indirect supervision must be immediately available
- The method of indirect supervision will be made explicit to you
- Your practice supervisor must complete a risk assessment in relation to each service user with whom you will practise
- The service user case load and its profile are confirmed as being commensurate with your competence and confidence profile
- The service user case load profile is confirmed as appropriate to your learning needs
- The parameters of your role are made explicit, understood and agreed by all concerned
- Your right and responsibility to alert your practice supervisor if you do not feel confident and/or competent to practise with service users alone is made explicit to you by your practice assessor
- Your right and responsibility to decline to practise with service users alone if you feel the service user profile is not in keeping with your competence and/or confidence profile or if you feel an unacceptable risk is made explicit to you by your practice supervisor.

→ **Prior to practising alone, you must have received personal safety training.**

- Relevant practice experience provider policies must be made available and explained to you
- You must have an immediate means of contacting the practice supervisor
- You must have an immediate means of contacting the practice area/service to which you have been allocated
- You must adhere to the practice experience provider's policy and guidance on 'keeping oneself safe' and the 'lone worker'. For each 'lone working' activity you and your practice supervisor must agree the following:
  - Service users with whom you will practise alone
  - Anticipated time of contact with each service user from commencement to completion
  - Reporting to the practice supervisor and/or the base before and after each service user contact or at pre-agreed times
  - If you do not 'report in' by the pre-agreed time the practice supervisor or practice area/service will attempt to make contact
  - If contact with you is not achieved, agreed procedures will be instigated to affirm your wellbeing. For example, in community services this is often an arrangement with the police for them to be informed if the safety of a health worker is in question.

The Royal College of Nurses have also produced useful guidance on [Personal safety when working alone: guidance for members working in health and social care \(RCN 2016\)](#).

## Section 7: Obtaining my degree and NMC registration

### 7.1 When will I complete my programme?

Once your final module result is available this will normally complete all results for your programme of study.

These will be presented at the Progression meeting which is the meeting at which final decisions are made regarding your compliance in meeting all regulatory, academic and practice related requirements of the programme.

### 7.2 What if something happens which affects my progression?

If issues have impacted on your progress through the programme this may delay you receiving your award and registering with the NMC. Your Staff Tutor will be able to give you advice and support on what you need to do.

### 7.3 What do I need to do to register with the NMC?

The university will contact you by email and require you to complete a personal details form. Please ensure that you complete and return this form promptly. This ensures that the data that the university holds for you is up to date and therefore the Nursing and Midwifery Council will receive accurate information about you. The Open University will not uplift your electronic transcript to the NMC until we are in receipt of your personal details form.

Once the team in The OU Qualifications Centre has confirmed the award of your BSc (Hons) qualification, and we have your returned Personal Details form, your electronic transcript will be uplifted to the NMC. Provided that you meet all the requirements, information regarding your declaration of health and character will then be forwarded electronically to the NMC too.

→

#### **PLEASE NOTE**

**You have five years to register your award with the NMC. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as specified in the NMC standards (NMC 2018).**

### 7.4 When will I receive my NMC registration?

Once the NMC is satisfied that the data upload from the university to the NMC is successful, the NMC will send you a registration pack to complete. The NMC indicate that packs are normally sent out 7-10 days after successful data upload.

When the NMC receives your completed application form and registration fee, a registrations officer will review the documents and if everything is completed correctly, registration will be completed within 2-10 working days. You will then receive a statement of entry to the register.

The NMC updates its [registration fees](#) regularly so please go to the NMC website to check the fee that you will be required to pay.

After receipt of your statement of entry, your prospective employer should then be able to complete their check that your entry is live on the register, and at that point you will be able to start work as a registered nurse.

If all stages of the process proceed smoothly this will typically take 2-3 months from the date you received your final results.



## 7.5 When I graduate how is my degree classification worked out?

Honours degrees awarded by the Open University are classified in the same way as other UK universities. There are four classes of honours: First-class (1), Upper second-class (2.1), Lower second-class (2.2) and Third-class (3).

The classification is derived from the grades of pass obtained from 120 credits of level 3 study and from grades of pass in up to a further 120 credits of study at levels 2 or 3 (i.e. up to 240 credits in total). More information on [working out your degree classification](#) is available in your StudentHome

## 7.6 Is there a graduation ceremony?

Attending a ceremony is an important milestone in your journey with The Open University. It is your day to celebrate your amazing success with family, friends and fellow graduates, to reflect on your achievements and look forward to your future as a member of the Open University alumni family. Our ceremonies are held throughout the UK and the ceremony schedule is split into two 'seasons'. March – June or September – November. You will be able to find information about the [graduation ceremonies](#) on StudentHome.

## Section 8: Notes Page

This space is for you to make your own notes or list your own key contacts