A guide for our partners

BSc (Hons) in Adult or Mental Health Nursing
Pre-registration nursing programme
1. Introduction

The Open University (OU) works in partnership with healthcare organisations to deliver a part-time, distance learning, pre-registration nursing programme (PRNP) for healthcare support workers. We are a national provider of nurse education, as well as a local provider through our national/regional offices and will work with you to develop an effective partnership. This guide, designed in sections to help you locate information easily, aims to provide the information you need to support students on the PRNP.
2. Benefits for partners

The programme offers partners a part-time, high-quality opportunity to:

- develop the skills of healthcare support workers and enhance their practice competence
- promote values and behaviours to enhance the delivery of safe, compassionate care
- make a real difference to the lives of service users
- meet future workforce service needs
- boost staff morale, recruitment and retention
- invest in the workforce
- widen participation in education.

“The Open University’s pre-reg nursing course is a dream come true for health care assistants in an area as remote as ours. We are in Argyll and Bute, where there have always been so many talented HCAs more than capable of becoming good nurses, but could not train to do so.

Before we started working with the OU – about seven years ago – they would have had to travel to another part of Scotland for their training and placements; for many home commitments simply made that impossible. However, now it’s a different story. The distance learning aspect of the OU means our HCAs can learn while they are working locally and this has brought opportunities for so many people to achieve their ambition of becoming qualified nurses. Doing the OU’s pre-reg course is the only way that was possible – and of course it’s beneficial not only to the students but also for us, as we have so many more trained nurses.”

Pat Tyrrell, Lead Nurse, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership

Image supplied by NHS Education Scotland “Extraordinary, Everyday” project. Acknowledged with thanks.
3. Shared responsibilities

This programme combines practice-based and supported open learning. The respective responsibilities of the partners and the OU are outlined below.

3.1 The responsibilities of the partners

It will be the responsibility of partners supporting students on the programme to:

- work with the OU to shortlist, interview and select members of staff suitable to undertake nurse education through a practice-based and supported open learning route
- be ready to respond to any issues relating to employment. Each student will remain an employee of your organisation and will be required to complete 2300 practice hours and 2450 study hours across the four-year programme
- release employees to undertake supernumerary practice time (2300 hours across the programme). The amount of study time provided by the employing organisation is locally determined based on agreement between the employer and the student
- provide in-house mandatory training and development workshops and release students to take part in face-to-face or online facilitated learning
- where appropriate, provide a venue for briefing students, mentor induction and tutorials
- provide appropriate practice learning opportunities and ensure these meet Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) requirements
- identify appropriately qualified registered nurses to mentor and assess students’ competence in practice, and ensure that mentors meet the current NMC requirements and are on the local mentor register
- ensure that time is available in practice for the mentor to meet regularly with each student to discuss student progress and further areas for practice development
- inform the OU about any issues or changes to the practice learning environment that may affect the learning opportunities for students, including the outcome of any internal or external quality reviews
- inform the OU immediately if you become aware of any issues that might affect a student’s fitness to practise
- participate in ‘fitness to practise’ reviews with the OU, as necessary.
3.2 The responsibilities of The Open University

It will be the responsibility of the OU to:

- work in partnership with you at each stage of the programme
- provide a staff tutor/regional education manager (based in each OU national/regional centre) who appoints tutors, oversees their work and quality assures the delivery of the programme
- ensure, by working collaboratively with you, that students are carefully selected and are appropriate for the PRNP
- audit the practice learning environment in collaboration with partners
- provide access to students’ online study materials for mentors and employers through an OU website
- provide mentor induction and regular updating
- negotiate suitable arrangements for practice learning
- provide a practice portfolio for student practice assessment
- organise and administer all the assessment and qualification procedures
- provide multi-media study materials for students and support materials for tutors
- provide a practice tutor to support students and mentors in the assessment of practice and monitor each student’s progress
- support mentors when making decisions regarding each student’s level of competence
- ensure that the staff tutor/regional education manager meets regularly with the employer or employer link to review the quality of student learning and support
- oversee each student’s fitness to practise and initiate a review of fitness, if necessary, during any stage of the student’s programme
- maintain student progress records and inform the NMC of each student’s fitness to practise following successful programme completion
- share with employers the outcomes of NMC annual monitoring review and any other major internal or external quality review
- involve practice staff in curriculum developments.
4. Recruitment and selection of students

Student case study

When the opportunity arose for Annette to apply for the OU’s pre-registration nursing programme, she decided, with the support and encouragement of her manager, to submit an application and was amazed, delighted and terrified in equal measures, when she was accepted. A dream came true when she started the programme because Annette had wanted to become a nurse ever since she left school, but the timing had never been right to start a pre-registration nursing programme.

During her programme, Annette has experienced learning in practice in a range of settings, including inpatient and community experiences.

Annette’s advice is simple:

“Don’t leave it too late – just do it! Studying can be hard, but it’s worthwhile. I am proud of my achievements because I’m certainly not a natural ‘academic’, so have had to work hard. Instead of convincing myself that I can’t do things, I now tell myself that I can, and I do. My confidence is increasing. I really cannot believe how lucky I am to have the opportunity to become a registered nurse – at last I feel that I am achieving my potential and that’s a great feeling.”

The OU and employer work in partnership throughout the recruitment and selection process.

4.1 Entry requirements

To meet NMC standards, each candidate must

- have the support of his or her employer to participate in the programme
- work in a healthcare practice setting where nursing is a primary intervention and registered nurses can support, supervise, assess and provide a sign-off mentor for the student
- provide evidence of his or her ability to understand and communicate effectively in written and spoken English
- demonstrate that he or she has the appropriate values and personal and intellectual qualities for nursing
- meet the minimum literacy and numeracy standards for entry to the programme. This is equivalent to Level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (www.qca.org.uk/qualifications) and Level 5 on the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (www.scqf.org.uk)
- have access to a computer and the internet, and have information technology/word processing skills
- be of good health and character
- agree to undergo a disclosure and barring check (or other applicable national screening procedure)
- complete a medical questionnaire and consent to further health review, as necessary.
4.2 Meeting entry requirements

The OU can provide guidance to your staff on ways to meet the current entry requirements. For example, if a potential applicant does not meet the numeracy entry requirement, the OU can offer a module *Starting with Maths* (Y182), available in Scotland or Northern Ireland only that meets the requirement. Completion of relevant OU modules can also demonstrate evidence of achievement of equivalent literacy requirements. Additional avenues are also open to applicants including for example, numeracy and literacy courses and assessment at Level 2 or above conducted by organisations such as Learn Direct (England) or local further education providers.

Potential applicants must meet the current entry requirements prior to submitting an application and have their certificates of literacy and numeracy available as proof of achievement.

Advice on routes into nursing (see Figure 1) can be obtained from the OU staff tutor/regional education manager who has responsibility for the PRNP in your nation/region (contact details can be found on page 12). The education/training manager in your organisation will advise about local support for achieving literacy and numeracy qualifications.

To meet the good character requirement it is essential that a disclosure and barring check (appropriate for the nation where you work, Scotland, Northern Ireland or England) is undertaken prior to entry on the pre-registration nursing programme. This is because students on the programme will access different client groups in various practice learning environments. In England a new Update Service has been introduced by the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS). The DBS Certificate, issued by the DBS in response to our application for disclosure of criminal record information, will be sent to the applicants only. The OU will need to see this original certificate as soon as applicants receive it.

Delay in its production may impede decisions regarding entry to the programme. If there is any criminal record information disclosed on an applicant’s certificate it may involve a review through the OU’s fitness to practise process. Criminal record information on a DBS Certificate does not automatically preclude applicants from entering the programme, but it does have to be risk assessed and reviewed and this can take time. Following review a recommendation will be made regarding the suitability of the applicant to enter the programme.

If there is insufficient time to complete a full review, any offer of a place will remain conditional and applicants will not be able to commence the programme. In this instance, applicants who continue to wish to join the programme will have to reapply for the next intake.

Following a DBS check applicants will be able to register with the Update Service and any future employer will then be able to check their current DBS status online. Further information about this is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/201178/Applicant_guide_v2.0_23.05.13.pdf

To meet the good health requirement initial health screening will be undertaken by the university. This may involve applicants seeking information about their own health records from their employer’s occupational health department. If any subsequent occupational health review or intervention is required, it will be undertaken within the applicant’s employing organisation. It is essential that sufficient time is allowed for this process, which can take up to three months, if there is a need for occupational health to follow-up.

4.3 Credit transfer

If applicants have successfully completed higher education study elsewhere that is relevant to pre-registration nursing, they may be able to gain credit that could lead to a shortened programme. For more information, please go to our website www.open.ac.uk/credit-transfer

4.4 The selection process

The programme is only open to those who are supported by employers working in partnership with the OU and who are successful following the selection
process. The main recruitment cycle is for an annual intake each September. Application forms can be requested from the staff tutor/regional education manager responsible for nursing in your nation/region (please see contact details on page 12). Applicants must meet the regulatory body’s minimum entry requirements for pre-registration nursing programmes, which include numeracy, literacy, and good character and health. Shortlisted candidates will be offered an interview. The interview process will include one or more representatives from the OU and a partner employing organisation. Service users and carers are involved in the interview process.

Figure 1: Healthcare support worker career progression opportunities

- **Healthcare support worker**
- **Enrol directly onto the Pre-registration nursing programme with employer sponsorship**
- **Joint selection process**
  - Meet NMC’s minimum entry requirements including numeracy, literacy, good health and character
  - Disclosure and barring check

- **Certificate of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice Stage 1**
- **Step off with a Foundation Degree in Healthcare Practice/Diploma of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice**
- **BSc (Hons) Nursing Programme Stage 1**
- **BSc (Hons) Nursing Programme Stage 2**
- **BSc (Hons) Nursing Programme Stage 3**
- **Adult or Mental Health Nursing BSc (Hons) and eligibility to apply for NMC Registration**
5. Preparing for the programme

The PRNP commences in September every year. Between June and August, staff in the OU national/regional centres appoint tutors, organise tutor groups, and invite applicants to introductory meetings, so it is important that potential students are recruited as early as possible.

The OU PRNP is delivered in a unique fashion. Our teaching is provided through multi-media learning resources and an online learning environment, and students are supported by tutors in both academic and practice settings.

Prior to commencing the programme:
- students will be notified of the names and contact details of their tutors and dates and venues of tutorials and workshops (tutorials may be face-to-face or online)
- students will receive the mailing for the first module *Enhancing your healthcare practice* including the practice portfolio, study materials and other resources
- a practice tutor will seek confirmation of each student’s mentor and their contact details and ensure that they are prepared for this role.

**Figure 2: Qualification structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Nursing</th>
<th>Mental Health Nursing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1 (120 credits)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stage 1 (120 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Enhancing your healthcare practice</em> (KYN117)</td>
<td><em>Enhancing your healthcare practice</em> (KYN117)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>An introduction to health and social care</em> (KYN101)</td>
<td><em>An introduction to health and social care</em> (KYN101)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NMC: Progression point 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>NMC: Progression point 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Stage 2 (120 credits)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Stage 2 (120 credits)</strong></td>
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<td><em>Principles and skills for nursing practice</em> (KYN237)</td>
<td><em>Principles and skills for nursing practice</em> (KYN237)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Human biology</em> (SKYN277)</td>
<td><em>The science of the mind: investigating mental health</em> (SKYN228)</td>
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<td><em>Exploring perspectives on health and illness</em> (KYN238)</td>
<td><em>Exploring perspectives on health and illness</em> (KYN238)</td>
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<td><strong>NMC: Progression point 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>NMC: Progression point 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Stage 3 (120 credits)</strong></td>
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<td><em>Preparing for graduate practice</em> (KYN317)</td>
<td><em>Preparing for graduate practice</em> (KYN317)</td>
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<td><em>Exploring practice</em> (KYN316)</td>
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**BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing** | **BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing**
6. Learning in the practice environment

Learning in practice environments is a compulsory part of the PRNP. It enables the integration of theory and practice to achieve the NMC standards for nurse education.

In order to achieve the NMC standards and be eligible to apply for entry to the professional register, the programme is made up of a minimum of 4,600 hours of combined theory and practice learning. A variety of health and social care settings are accessed for practice learning. Students will gain community and in-patient service experience during each practice module. Practice learning environments are audited and may include the NHS, voluntary and independent sectors.

The focus of learning in practice environments is the delivery of health care in a way that protects the public and ensures that service users are at the centre of any care provided. The nursing profession is a self-regulated profession and this obligation is monitored by the NMC.

6.1 NMC curriculum hours

The programme typically takes four years and one month to complete, or three years for students who enter the programme at stage 2. The programme must be completed within seven years to meet NMC part-time study requirements. Table 1 outlines how the 2,450 theory hours and 2,300 practice hours are distributed across the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Programme</th>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Theory (hours)</th>
<th>Supernumerary practice (hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Enhancing your healthcare practice (KYN117)</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>An Introduction into health and social care (KYN101)</td>
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<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Principles and skills for nursing practice (KYN237)</td>
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<td>850</td>
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<td>Human biology (SKYN277) or The science of the mind: investigating mental health (SKYN228)</td>
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<td>Exploring perspectives on health and illness (KYN238)</td>
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<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Preparing for graduate practice (KYN317)</td>
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<td>Exploring practice (KYN316)</td>
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<td>Total hours</td>
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The programme study hours are used for:

- **Theory:** taking part in learning activities, reading, watching DVDs and other audio-visual resources, online forums, preparing assignments and personal study. This work may be completed in the student's own home, in a library or wherever he or she finds it best to study.

- **Supernumerary practice:** sustained learning in practice in a range of settings as part of a team (which can include client follow through and following care pathways), formative and summative assessment of achievement in practice. Supernumerary practice time and assessed achievement in practice must be evidenced in the student's portfolio.

A typical student programme is set out in Figure 3.

6.2 **The role of the mentor**

Mentors are vital to students' success on the programme. It is the responsibility of the partner to provide a mentor. Mentors facilitate, supervise and assess students' learning in practice. Mentors should be knowledgeable and experienced NMC registrants who hold a mentor qualification and who can support students when accessing different learning opportunities to enable them to develop the skills and achieve the competencies required. Mentors must be available to support learning in practice environments for a minimum of 40% of student's practice time.

Mentors must comply with current NMC requirements, be suitably prepared, be up-to-date, be on the local register of mentors and be a 'sign-off' mentor where appropriate. All mentors will be required to complete an induction to the OU PRNP.

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**Figure 3: Student programme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
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<td>Aug</td>
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KYN101
KYN117
KYN237
SKYN277/SKYN228
KYN238
KYN317
KYN316
Final Results (FR)
6.3 The role of the practice tutor

Practice tutors are employed by the OU to provide student support at each stage of the programme. They assist the integration of academic and practice-based learning so students successfully progress through the programme. By bringing together these facets of learning, a practice tutor supports each student holistically. The practice tutor:

- ensures that students, mentors and others supervising student learning in practice are clear about their roles, responsibilities and relationships within the programme
- supports mentors in their assessment of students’ evidence to support claims of achievement of the NMC competencies
- monitors that NMC practice learning requirements are met and verifies compliance with NMC requirements.

6.4 The role of the staff tutor/regional education manager

Staff tutors/regional education managers are employed by the OU in the national/regional offices to oversee and assure the quality of the student journey through the programme (contact details can be found on page 12). This is achieved by:

- working in partnership with employers to address any issues that arise or actions that may be necessary in relation to practice learning environments
- overseeing the completion of learning environment audits and practice profiles
- overseeing the negotiation of access to the range and breadth of practice learning opportunities for students required by the NMC
- managing the preparation and updating activities for the employer, mentors, other supervisors and students
- recruiting, selecting and monitoring the performance of practice tutors and module tutors
- monitoring students’ progression in practice through regular reports from practice tutors
- acting as a first point of contact if practice learning issues emerge that the practice tutor is unable to resolve
- identifying good practice and ensuring it is communicated to everyone involved in the programme
- confirming with practice units the continued requirement for students to access employer mandatory training in order to ensure health and safety in the workplace
- liaising with partners regarding the outcome of internal and external quality reviews.
7. Conclusion

We hope this guide has provided you with a useful overview of the PRNP. Should you need any further details, please contact the staff tutor/regional education manager responsible for the PRNP for your nation/region (contact details below).

### The Open University national/regional centres:

#### Contact your local national/regional centre for further advice and guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Area covered</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The OU in London</td>
<td><em>Greater London</em></td>
<td>020 7485 6597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the South East</td>
<td><em>Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex</em></td>
<td>01342 327821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the South</td>
<td><em>Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Channel Islands, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, part of Wiltshire (including Salisbury)</em></td>
<td>01865 327000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the South West</td>
<td><em>Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Scilly Isles, most of Wiltshire</em></td>
<td>0117 929 9641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the West Midlands</td>
<td><em>Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Shropshire, most of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands</em></td>
<td>0121 426 1661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the East Midlands</td>
<td><em>Most of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, part of Staffordshire (Burton-on-Trent area)</em></td>
<td>0115 962 5451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the East of England</td>
<td><em>Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk</em></td>
<td>01223 364721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in Yorkshire</td>
<td><em>North, South, East Riding of Yorkshire, West Yorkshire</em></td>
<td>0113 244 4431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the North West</td>
<td><em>Cheshire, part of Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside</em></td>
<td>0161 998 7272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in the North</td>
<td><em>Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Teesside, Tyne and Wear</em></td>
<td>0191 477 6100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OU in Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td>029 2047 1019</td>
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<tr>
<td>The OU in Scotland</td>
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<td>0131 226 3851</td>
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<td>The OU in Ireland</td>
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<td>028 9024 5025</td>
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