

**Working in healthcare?
Thinking about a career in nursing?
Talk to The Open University about their unique work-based
BSc (Hons) degree in Nursing**

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions about Qualifications and Entrance Criteria

Q. What are the entrance criteria to study nursing at The Open University?

- A. Current programme entry requirements **at the closing date for applications** include:
- hold a substantive permanent post in the Trust contracted at 26 hours or above
 - have the support of your line manager to apply
 - literacy (Functional skills level 2 or equivalent e.g. GCSE Grade C or above in English)
 - numeracy (Functional skills level 2 or equivalent e.g. GCSE Grade C or above in Maths)
 - good character, evidenced through self-declaration and an enhanced criminal record disclosure
 - good health, evidenced through self-declaration of health status, occupational health screening, review of previous sickness and absence record
 - two references – one of which must be from your current employer (where applicable)

Q. Do I need all of my GCSE/A Level certificates?

- A. Yes, your certificates will need to be produced at interview for GCSE English and Maths Grade C or equivalent to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council entry requirements.

Q. I don't have all my certificates and my school is no longer there – what can I do?

- A. Make contact with the examining board, who should hold a record ie: CCEA

Q. I have an NVQ/HNC/BTEC but it isn't in health and social care, does this meet the English language requirement?

- A. Yes, if it is Level 2 or above.

Q. I have completed K100 – does that count towards credit for the programme?

- A. No. However, it can be used to demonstrate appropriate level of English skills.

Q. I do not work as a Nursing Assistant / Healthcare Assistant within the Trust could I still apply?

- A. Yes, you can still apply if you work in an area where you are not involved in direct patient care. However, you must, have the necessary qualifications, work a minimum of 26 hours per week and have the support of your manager.

Q. Is there an age limit for applicants?

- A. No. We encourage all ages to apply for the programme.

Q. I have dyslexia, can I still apply?

A. Yes. The Open University pride themselves on supporting students with disabilities and if you are successful at interview we will endeavour to provide the necessary reasonable adjustments you require.

Q. I have already completed K101 and K117 before these modules ceased. Will these allow me to transfer directly to Part 2 of the nursing programme.

A. If you have successfully completed the above modules in recent years, you will be able to use both of these modules and apply using The Open University Credit Migration procedure to have these accredited towards year one of the BSc Nursing programme. However, you will still need to successfully apply for a place on the nursing programme.

Q. Is there any study I can undertake before starting the nursing programme?

A. You can undertake K102 and K104 independently and then you will not have to complete these modules as part of the nursing programme. However, you will still need to successfully apply for a place on the nursing programme.

Questions about the BSc (Hons) Nursing Degree

Q. How long does it take to complete The Open University nursing degree programme?

A. The Open University programme takes approximately four years of part-time study to complete. The programme is divided into three parts and consists of 50% theoretical work and 50% practice placement.

Q. How is the programme assessed?

A. Each module on the programme is assessed in a variety of ways and these include, assignments, exams and interactive computer marked assessments. Practice placements are assessed by both a Practice Assessor and a Practice Tutor / Academic Assessor.

Q. How long are my practice placements?

A. You will need to spend 2300 hours in practice placement over the duration of your programme. This usually takes place over 9 placements during the 4 years of the programme. Placements will normally be approximately 6 – 8 weeks duration.

Q. Can I choose where I go on placement?

A. No. You will be **required** to work in the placement you are allocated. Placements will predominantly be within the boundaries of your employing Trust. While we make every effort to place you as close to your home, this may not always be possible. If you are considering Learning Disability or Children and Young People Nursing, placements may be province wide.

Q. Will I be provided with a uniform for placement?

A. Yes you will be provided with a uniform and this must be worn during practice placement. Uniform policy must be adhered to.

Q. How many places are available at The Open University each year?

A. Undergraduate nursing places at The Open University are commissioned by the Department of Health and local Health and Social Care Trusts. The numbers are dependant on workforce plans and are not finalised until April each year. However, in 2021 there were approximately 190 nursing places available across the four fields of practice.

Q. What fields of nursing practice are offered by The Open University?

A. Since 2020 The Open University are offering all fields of nursing practice i.e. Adult, Children's and Young People, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities.

Q. How is The Open University programme delivered?

A. The theoretical component of The Open University programme is mostly delivered online and you then develop your skills and use the theory learned while on practice placement.

Q. What support will I receive while undertaking the programme?

A. During the theory modules you will receive support from your module tutor and while on practice placement you will have a practice supervisor(s) and a practice assessor to guide your development. You will also be supported by a Practice Tutor from The Open University who will act as your academic assessor while you are on placement. There is also a Staff Tutor who is linked with each Health and Social Care Trust that you can contact. In addition, the Practice Education Team within each local Trust will provide all Open University students with excellent support and guidance.

Q. What documentation will I be expected to complete during my time on practice placement?

A. As part of your practice placement you will have to provide evidence of your learning. This is contained in a document known as the electronic Northern Ireland Practice Assessment Document (eNIPAD) and forms a record of your achievement over the programme. You will have to complete this document electronically.

Q. I currently work 9am – 5pm. Will I be expected to do shift work while on practice placement?

A. Yes. Some shift work, including night duty and weekend work is a Nursing and Midwifery Council requirement for you to successfully complete the programme. You will be expected to commence and finish your shift in line with your colleagues in the practice placement.

Questions about pay and funding arrangements

Q. Will I get paid the same wage while taking part in the programme?

A. To take part in the programme you must be hold a permanent contract working a minimum of 26 hours per week. Your employer will pay your contracted hours.

Q. Will I still get my unsociable hours payment?

A. Yes, you are paid accordingly for the hours worked.

Q. I currently work part-time due to childcare. Can I still keep my current hours?

A. You must be employed to work at least 26 hours a week while on the programme. At no stage during the 4 years of the programme can you reduce your working hours below 26 hours per week.

General Questions

Q. Can I still undertake bank or agency work while on the programme.

A. Yes, provided that it does not impact on your study or your placements. You must **not** work bank shifts on allocated study days.

Q. If I gain a place on The Open University nursing programme will I be able to take holidays / annual leave when I want to?

A. Placement dates are predetermined. These will be provided to you when you commence the programme and at the start of each part of the programme. While you are on placement you will not be able to take annual leave at any time during your placement period. However, outside of the placement dates, annual leave can be negotiated with your manager as per normal arrangements. During the period of completing The Open University nursing degree your annual leave entitlement will continue to be based on your substantive post within the trust.

Q. My manager will not support my application, but I work part-time. Can I complete the programme in my own time instead?

A. You will not be able to complete the nursing degree without the full support of your line manager. However, you are welcome to undertake some modules in your own time but you will have to provide your own funding.

Q. When I complete my nursing degree through The Open University will I be guaranteed a job as a Registered Nurse?

A. The majority of Health and Social Care Trusts are currently guaranteeing students who successfully complete The Open University programme positions as registered nurses. Notwithstanding the above, the current nursing workforce challenges being faced in Northern Ireland is likely to mean that you will be in high demand when you successfully complete this programme.

Q. What happens if I become ill, or pregnant or need to leave the programme (temporarily) for other reasons.

A. The Open University takes the welfare of its students very seriously. As such, there are deferral processes that will allow you to step away from the programme for a period of time depending on your circumstances. In most circumstances, you may be able to “bank” any completed assessments and will not have to undertake these again when you rejoin. Each individual circumstance is different and we would ask that if you are feeling you need to defer or take a break from the programme at any stage, you should contact someone at the University as soon as possible.

**For more information about the programme, contact: The Open University
Nursing Team.**

Email: Ireland-Nursing-Applications@open.ac.uk