



---

# Changes to how nurses, midwives and nursing associates are taught

Have your say



## Who we are



We are the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

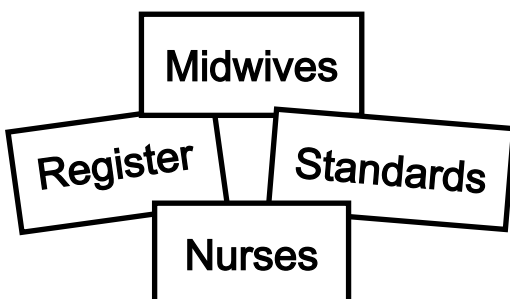


We make sure **nurses, midwives** and **nursing associates** have the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs well and in a safe way.



We keep a list of all the people who can work as nurses and midwives in the UK. We also keep the list of nursing associates in England.

This list is called the **Register**.



Some words in this leaflet are in **bold**. There is a list of what they mean at the end.

## What this is about



We want to know what you think about something called **practice learning**.



**Practice learning** is where students learn by caring for people and patients in real life health and care settings.

## More information

When someone wants to be a nurse, midwife or nursing associate in the United Kingdom, they must study a course that we have **approved**.

**Approved** means we think the course meets our education **standards**.



Our education standards say:



- how students should be taught
- what students should learn to become a nurse, midwife or nursing associate.



Meeting the right education standards means the quality of a student's education is very good.



Students learn in different ways.

Half of their course is in the classroom.



Half of their course is in real places like hospitals, clinics, care homes and even in a person's home.



To do this, students must go on a **placement** where they go to a real workplace to practise their skills.



Practice learning is a very important way that students learn to care for people properly.



Students learn by:

- talking to a patient about their illness



- giving someone an injection



- helping a woman in labour and giving birth.



Nurses, midwives and nursing associates check students are doing this safely.



If students do not get a chance to practise their learning in a real setting they can learn using pretend patients, actors or equipment. This is called **simulated practice learning**.

# Why are we asking what you think?



We are looking at our education standards around practice learning.



We checked the education standards include everything a student needs to know to care for people properly when they join our Register.

We spoke to:



- students
- university teachers
- people on our Register
- patients.



People told us the quality of practice learning can be better for some students than others.



For example, sometimes nurses, midwives and nursing associates have too much work to do. This means they do not have enough time to properly check a student's practice learning.

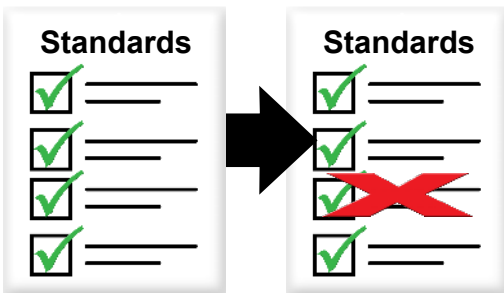


We want to make things clearer and fairer so that all students can get the right skills and knowledge to do their jobs well.



We cannot do this alone and we are not responsible for all these things. So we might need help from other people across health and care.

# We want you to have your say



We want to know if we should change some of our education standards.



You can tell us what you think by:

Filling in our online survey  
[nmcuk.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e6WzXyONnNV3g2](https://nmcuk.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e6WzXyONnNV3g2)



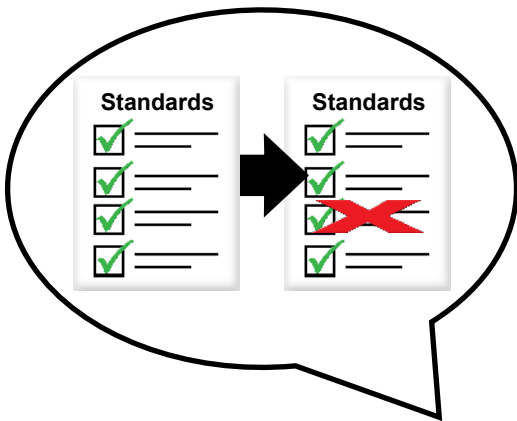
You must reply by 23 July 2026.



Your answers will help us make the right choices.



We will look at everyone's ideas to help us decide if we need to change some of our education standards.



We will let you know if we make any changes.



If you have any questions about this, please email us at:  
**[consultations@nmc-uk.org](mailto:consultations@nmc-uk.org)**

# Our questions



These questions are about changes we could make in the education standards for student nurses, midwives and nursing associates.

The questions ask about:

- **reasonable adjustments**



**Reasonable adjustments** are small changes that help people with a disability be treated equally.



- **courses for nurses**



- courses for midwives.



## Reasonable adjustments

The law says that these changes must be made.



Our education standards say:

- student nurses, midwives and nursing associates should be comfortable when asking for reasonable adjustments
- university teachers and anyone supporting students with their learning should make sure that these adjustments are put in place in both the classroom and practice learning.

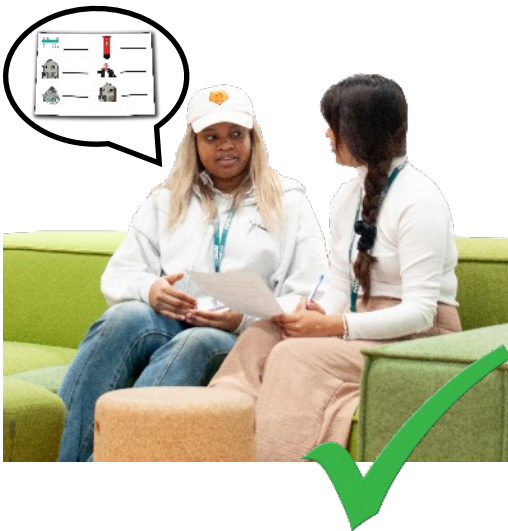




We want to make sure that students, university teachers and anyone supporting students with their learning understand what reasonable adjustments are.



This will help them work together to make these small changes in both classrooms and practice learning places if students ask for them.



1. Do you agree or disagree that we should make it clear that university teachers in classrooms and practice learning places must listen to students when they ask for reasonable adjustments and if possible, make those changes happen?



2. Do you agree or disagree with making university teachers in classrooms and practice learning places work together to ensure reasonable adjustments requests from students are put in place, if it's possible to do so?

## Making nursing and midwifery education better by teaching anti-racism, safety, and respect



3. Do you agree or disagree that we should teach student nurses, nursing associates and midwives anti-racism, safety, and respect for everyone? This will help students learn how to care for people from different backgrounds the right way.

## Suggested changes to courses for nurses and nursing associates



4. Do you agree or disagree with changing our education standards so that a midwife with additional qualifications can look after a student nurse when they are on a placement?



5. Some students and university teachers told us they worry more about finishing their hours than the quality of learning.



We want to change the amount of time students need to study from at least 4,600 hours in total to at least 3,600 hours.



Half the time will still be in the classroom or doing work like reading and writing, and half the time will be on placement.



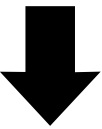
Do you agree or disagree with this change?



6. Our education standards say that student nursing associates must study for at least half the amount of time that student nurses do.



If we change the amount of hours student nurses need to study from at least 4,600 to at least 3,600, we will still make student nursing associates study for 2,300 hours.



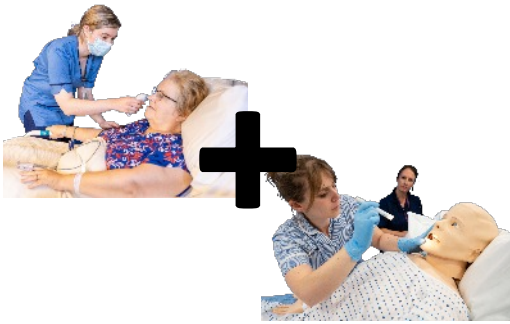
This is because less than 2,300 hours is not enough time to learn what they need to know to become a qualified nursing associate.



Do you agree or disagree with this change?



- 7. If we change the amount of time student nurses need to study to at least 3,600 hours, we will need to change how much of their practice learning can be simulated practice learning.



This is so students get the right mix of real life and simulated practice learning.



At the moment, students can do up to a quarter of practice learning as simulated practice learning.



Do you agree or disagree with keeping simulated practice learning as no more than a quarter of practice learning hours?



8. We want to make sure all student nurses do some practice learning in the community.

For example, in people's homes, rather than just hospitals.



This means that students will learn what it is like to be with people in different health and care settings.



Do you agree or disagree with this change?

## **Suggested changes to courses for midwives**



9. Our education standards say that student midwives must care for at least 40 women in labour and giving birth.



Our standards also say that student midwives should care for at least another 40 more women with extra needs when pregnant and giving birth.



We want to improve the education of student midwives so that they can care for at least 40 women with extra needs.



What do you think we should do to improve this?



10. We want to change how long student midwives study for from at least 3 years to at least 4 years.



This will give them more time to learn so they have the right skills, knowledge and confidence to work as a midwife.



Do you agree or disagree?



11. We think that student midwives should do one of their practice placements at the end of their course and that this placement should be at least 8 weeks long.



This will help them to care for people properly when they join our Register.



Do you agree or disagree?



12. If midwifery courses become 4 years instead of 3, do you agree or disagree that we should make courses longer for nurses who want to become midwives?



13. We want to make sure that student midwives are helped by the same midwives with the right experience while they are on their placements rather than lots of different people.



We think this is better for learning.



Do you agree or disagree?



14. Student midwives use simulated practice learning as part of their practice learning.



Simulated practice learning can help students learn when there are not enough real-life chances to do so. For example, helping women to give birth when babies are in the wrong position. This is called a **breech** birth.



The time students spend on simulated learning does not count towards their final number of practice learning hours and we want to look at changing this.



Do you agree or disagree that simulated practice learning should count towards a student midwife's overall practice learning hours?



15. Do you think these changes will affect people based on their **protected characteristics**, or other things such as whether they have children or what jobs their parents had?

**Protected characteristics** are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.



16. Do you think these changes will affect people who speak Welsh?

## What the words mean

**Anti-racist:** means more than just not being racist. It means doing something about racism and standing against it. This means changing our rules, how we do things, and the way we work to make sure everyone is treated fairly and has a better life.

**Approved** means we think the course meets our education standards.

**Black, Asian and minority ethnic people:** People who may have a different colour skin. Or be a different religion. They may come from another country. Or may live in a different way. Some people may be from more than one country or background.

**Breech birth:** When a baby is positioned with their bottom or feet coming out first instead of their head..

**Midwives:** People who are taught to give women support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour, the birth and after the baby is born.

**Nurses:** People who are taught to give safe and kind care to help people who have health problems and to help people to stay well.

**Nursing associates:** This is a role in England. Nursing associates are taught to work with nurses to support and care for patients.

**Placement:** When students go to a real workplace to practise their skills.

**Practice learning:** Where students learn by caring for people and patients in real life health and care settings.

**Protected characteristics** are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

**Racism:** When someone treats another person differently or unfairly because of their background, culture, or religious beliefs or how they live.

**Reasonable adjustments:** Small changes that can help people with a disability be treated equally. The law says that reasonable adjustments should be put in place.

**Register:** A list of all the people who have the right training and meet our rules to work as a nurse or midwife in the UK, or nursing associate in England. People who can give good, safe care.

**Simulated practice learning:** If students don't have the opportunity to practice something in real life, they can learn using pretend patients, actors or equipment instead of real patients.

**Standards:** These say how students should be taught, what people should expect, and what students need to know to become a nurse, midwife or nursing associate.



## Credits

This paper has been designed and produced for the Nursing and Midwifery Council. It includes material from the Inspired Easy Read Collection and cannot be used anywhere else without written permission from Inspired Services Publishing Ltd.

Ref ISL105 26. April 2026.

[www.inspiredservices.org.uk](http://www.inspiredservices.org.uk)



**Speaking Up Together -**  
making Easy Read information.

**nmc**  
**Nursing &  
Midwifery  
Council**

The nursing and midwifery regulator for  
England, Wales, Scotland and Northern  
Ireland. Registered charity in England and  
Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362).

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ

T 020 7637 7181

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