

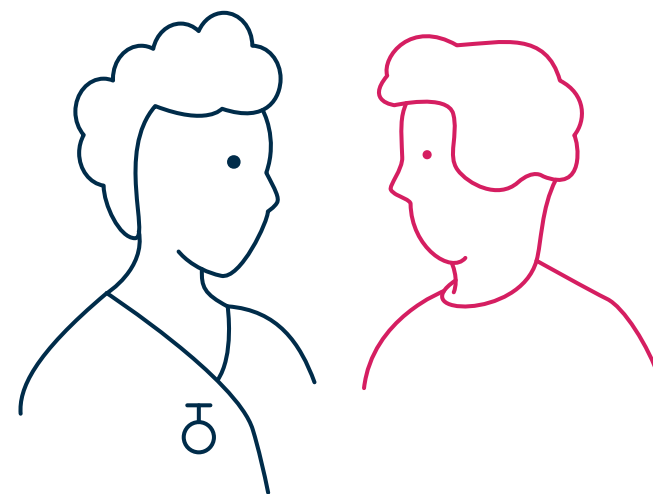
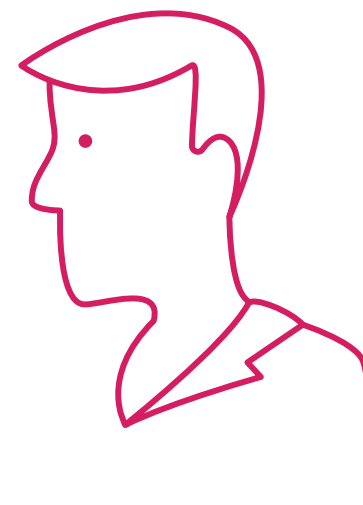
Quality assurance framework for nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education



Updated May 2019

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Foreword

We recently published new education standards that set out what we expect from the professionals of the future, so they can deliver safe, evidence-based person-centred care.

The standards are ambitious. To achieve this ambition, we also had to transform the approach to professional education and training. Our new standards for providers of nursing and midwifery education reflect this.

We hope you'll agree that the changes to our education standards are positive ones.

The new education standards have implications for the way we quality assure [education institutions](#) and programmes. So we've published this document – a new [Quality assurance](#) framework.

We'll roll this framework out over the next two years. This year our focus is on approving new programmes against our new standards. This quality assurance (QA) activity will allow us to gather information about how [approved education institutions](#) (AEIs) and their practice learning partners plan to introduce our new standards. The data we collect will inform our risk based, proportionate approach to QA now and in the future.

We developed this document following an independent review of QA of nursing and midwifery education, and engagement across the UK. I'm particularly indebted to the members of the QA reference group for their support and challenge to our proposals.

I look forward to collaborating with you as we introduce this new QA framework.



Geraldine Walters

Professor Geraldine Walters
CBE PhD MBA RN

Director of Education and Standards

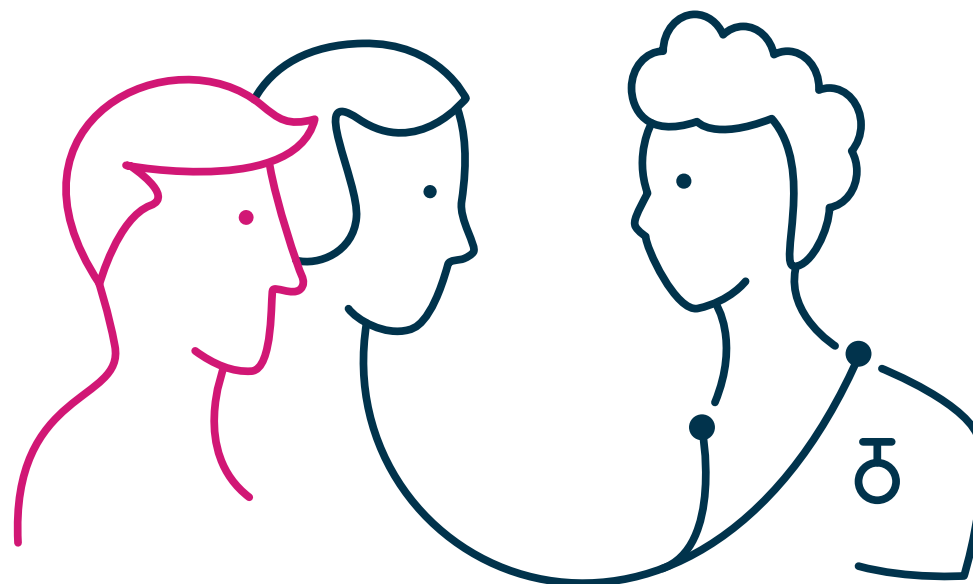
Introduction

To make sure that people have confidence in the care they receive we must make sure that nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education and training is high quality and meets our standards.

QA of education gives us the confidence that education institutions are meeting our standards for education and training. This helps us to know that students who have successfully completed an approved programme are meeting the standards of proficiency that we require before they join our register. It's one of the ways we fulfil our duty to protect the public.

If QA identifies that an education institution isn't meeting our standards we must take action so the education institution returns to compliance. This will ensure that there is public confidence in our role in nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education and encourages the education institution to remain responsible for meeting our standards.

Our QA framework shows how we do this, who we engage with and what we expect of the AElS and practice learning partners that manage and deliver professional education and training.



Our new education standards

As part of our ambitious five year programme of change for education we're reviewing all our education standards. We're now at the halfway point.

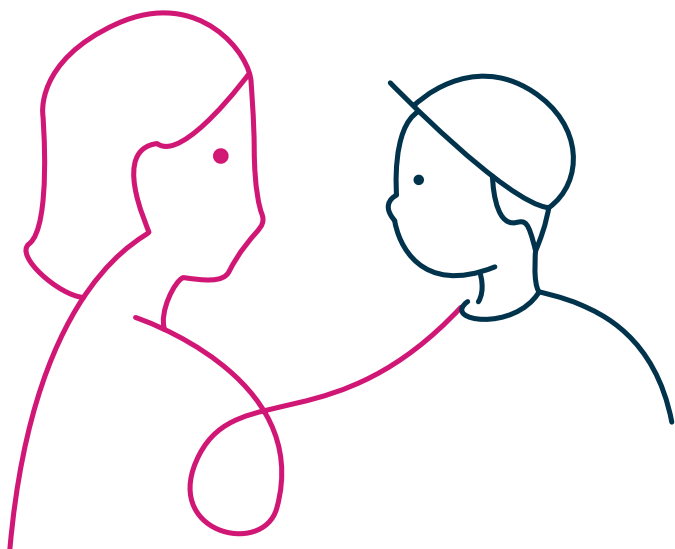
In March our Council agreed new:

- [Standards of proficiency for registered nurses](#)
- [Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education](#)
- [Standards for student supervision and assessment](#)
- [Standards for pre registration nursing programmes](#)
- [Standards for prescribing programmes](#)

It also agreed to adopt the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Competency framework for all prescribers](#) and a new approach to how we quality assure.

In September our Council agreed new:

- [Standards of proficiency for nursing associates](#)
- [Standards for pre registration nursing associate programmes](#)



About the framework

We've produced the QA framework for people who are interested in our work in quality assurance. In particular, it's for people who are involved in managing and delivering nursing, midwifery and nursing associate education.

Like our new standards, our new QA framework is informed by the ways in which health, care and professional education are changing. It reflects our outcome-focussed approach to setting new standards.

Our approach to QA gives us the flexibility to assure new and flexible models of educational programme delivery, which may involve local partnerships and work based approaches. The new framework enhances our ability to recognise issues early to make sure we can be proactive in focussing on areas where we know there are risks, or where data suggests that we should be focussing our attention.

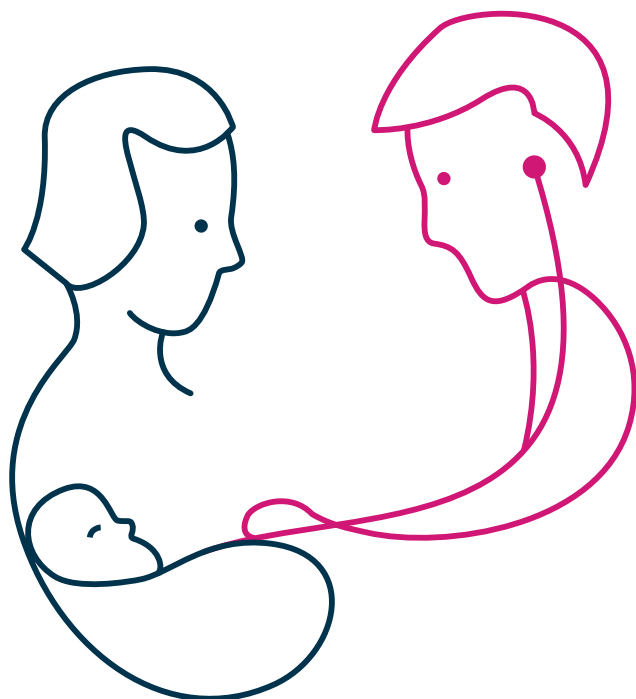
We also wanted to develop a framework that would use assurance data from different sources and avoid duplication to make the process more streamlined and less burdensome for education institutions.

People at the heart of QA

As with all aspects of our work at the NMC we involve people to ensure that the person-centred approach to our new standards follows through to QA of education.

Our previous QA framework sought to make sure that people were involved in QA of education. Under the new framework we're increasing this commitment to make sure that people are at the centre of our work in education and training, that their voices are heard, and that people know how they can take part in QA of education.

We'll actively listen and we'll act appropriately when we get feedback. We believe this will instil confidence in the way in which nurses, midwives and nursing associates are prepared for professional practice and will demonstrate our commitment to being a person-centred professional regulator.



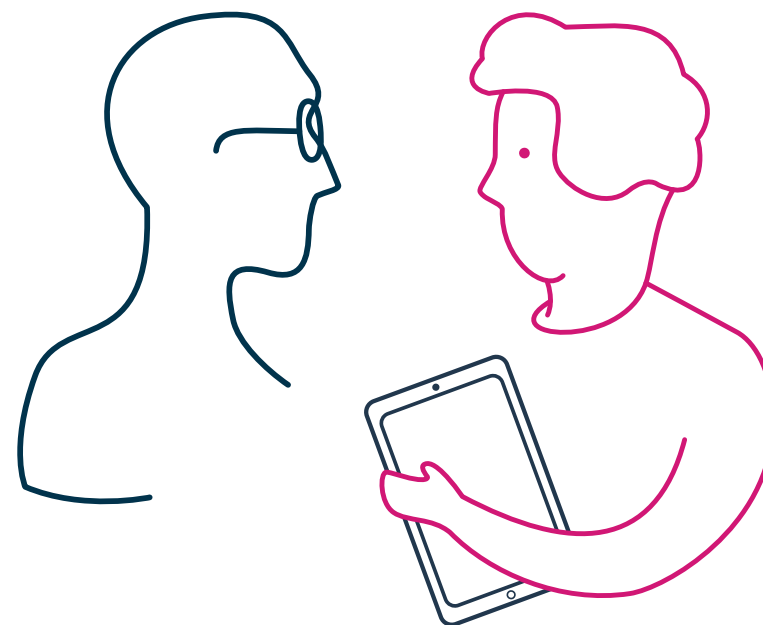
Our delivery partner

For the 2018-2019 academic year Mott MacDonald will continue to carry out our QA activity on our behalf. They host a website and QA hub and have published the QA handbook that sets out the detail of our QA processes. The handbook describes the evidence that education institutions and their practice learning partners need to provide to demonstrate that they meet our standards.

Mott MacDonald will visit organisations to give us the information we need to make approval decisions about programmes and institutions.

Following a procurement exercise, we have reappointed Mott MacDonald as our QA delivery partner for an additional three years, starting in the 2019-2020 academic year.

We recently went out to tender for a new QA delivery partner. This new partner will assume this responsibility for the 2019-2020 academic year.



Timelines

We'll introduce this new QA framework over two years from September 2018.

We'll start with the first wave of approvals of:

- [pre registration nursing programmes](#)
- [nurse and midwife prescribing programmes](#)
- [pre registration nursing associate programmes](#).

This will be followed by programme approval for:

- [pre registration midwifery programmes](#)
- other post registration programmes.

We'll publish the standards for midwifery education and post-registration programmes towards the end of 2019 and into 2020.

We'll update this document every year to reflect the introduction of the QA framework. We'll get in touch with AEs before then if we make any changes during the academic year.

Please [email us](#) with any feedback you'd like to share.

March 2018

Council approved standards for education and training, *Standards of proficiency for registered nurses*, and standards for nurse and midwife prescribers.

August 2018

New QA framework published.

September 2018

QA framework came into force. Council approved *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and *Standards for pre registration nursing associate programmes*.

from October 2018

Programme approval against *Standards for pre registration nursing programmes*.

from October 2018

Programme approval against *Standards for pre registration nursing associate programmes*.

QA approval activity

from October 2018

Programme approval against *Standards for prescribing programmes*.

from January 2020

Programme approval against *Standards for pre registration midwifery programmes*.

How we quality assure

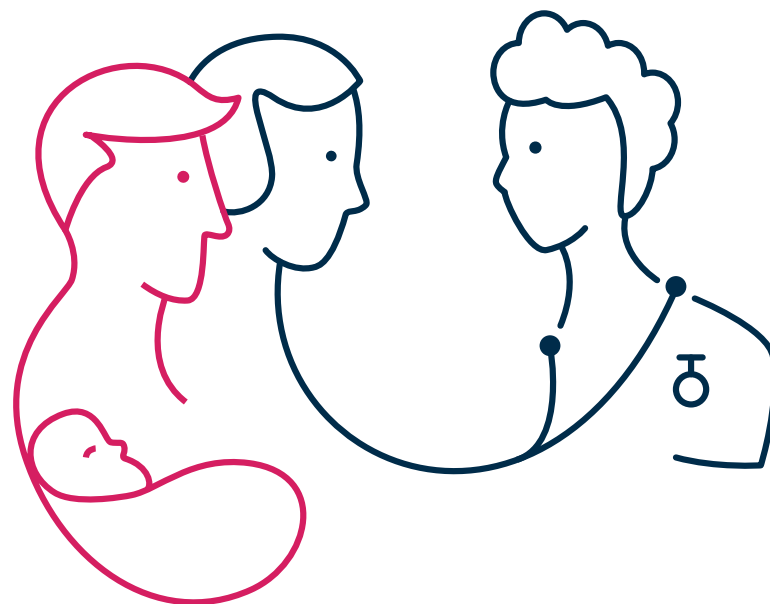
Part of our role¹ is to set standards for education and training that enable students to achieve our standards of proficiency before joining the register.² We also have to satisfy ourselves that AEs and practice learning partners are meeting the standards and requirements we set.³

This QA framework and the QA handbook set out what evidence education institutions need to demonstrate to satisfy us that they meet the education and training when we decide to give approval.⁴

Our regulator, the [Professional Standards Authority \(PSA\)](#), defines right touch regulation as being proportionate, consistent, targeted, transparent, accountable and agile. We've aligned our QA framework to these principles. The PSA is reviewing its approach to right touch regulation – if their position changes, we'll review our approach to QA of education.

We believe that it's best to realise the professionalism of those joining our register through education and training that's underpinned by effective partnerships between education institutions and their placement learning partners at all levels. Our new QA approach focuses on how effective those partnerships are.

We've set the standards for nurse and midwife education as degree level entry professions and nursing associate education as a foundation degree level entry profession. So education institutions seeking approval of programmes and AEs delivering programmes must have the relevant degree awarding powers (or have formally agreed access to those powers through another degree-awarding institution).



¹ Article 15(1) of the [Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001](#) (the 'Order')

² Article 5(2) of the Order

³ Article 15(2) (b) of the Order

⁴ Article 15(8) of the Order

Our standards for education and training apply to all AEs and their practice learning partners that are running NMC approved programmes.

They aim to provide AEs and practice learning partners with the flexibility to develop innovative approaches to professional education while being accountable for local delivery and management in line with our standards.

The standards for education and training are in three parts:

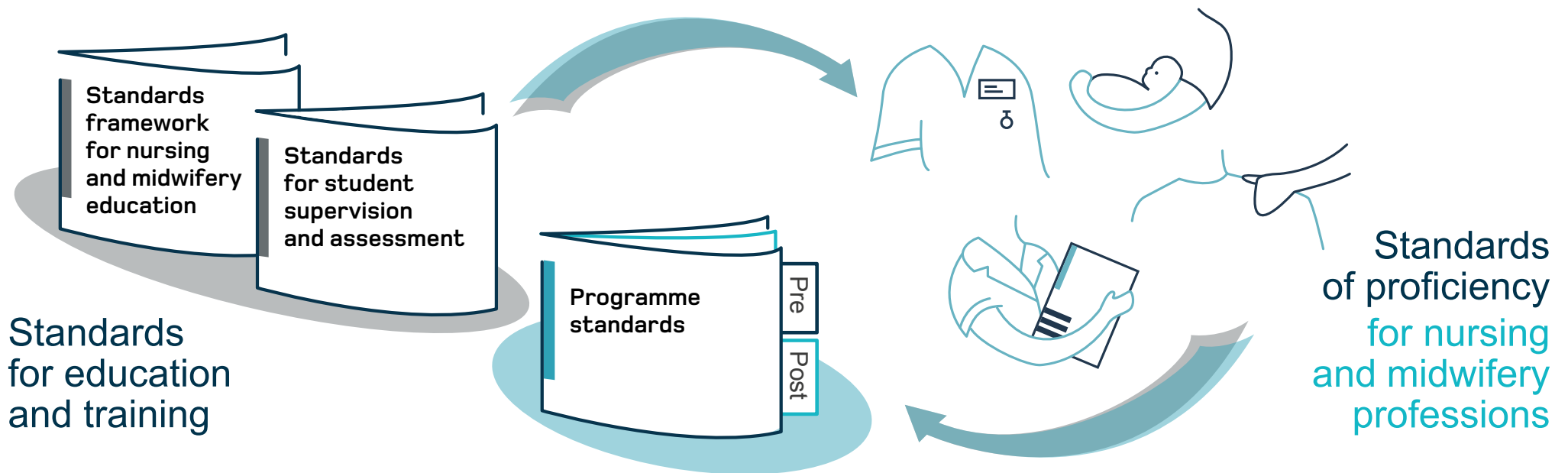
Part 1: *Standards framework for nursing⁵ and midwifery education*

Part 2: *Standards for student supervision and assessment*

Part 3: *Programme standards*

These standards help students achieve proficiencies and programme outcomes.

The structure of the standards for education and training, and how they interact with the standards of proficiency, is set out below.



⁵ We've used the phrase 'nursing' in this document to apply to the work of nurses and nursing associates. Nursing associates are a distinct profession with their own part of our register, but they are part of the nursing team.

A gateway approach to approval

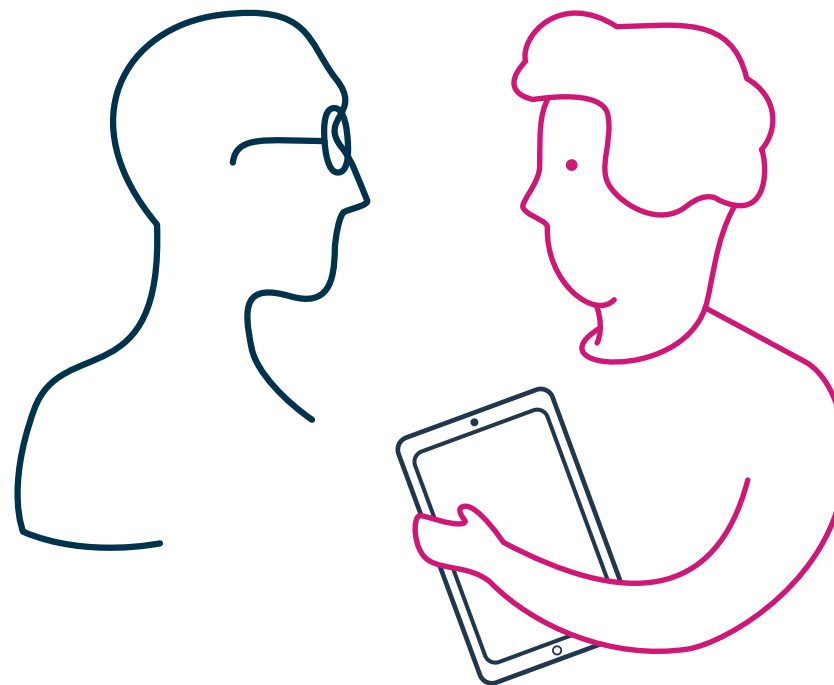
Our QA framework aligns the structure of the new standards to how we will approve education institutions and new programmes.

Using a gateway model enables us to take a proportionate yet robust approach to QA for organisations that want to implement our new standards. Through this model, we can differentiate the approval process between education institutions depending on whether or not the institution is already running approved programmes.

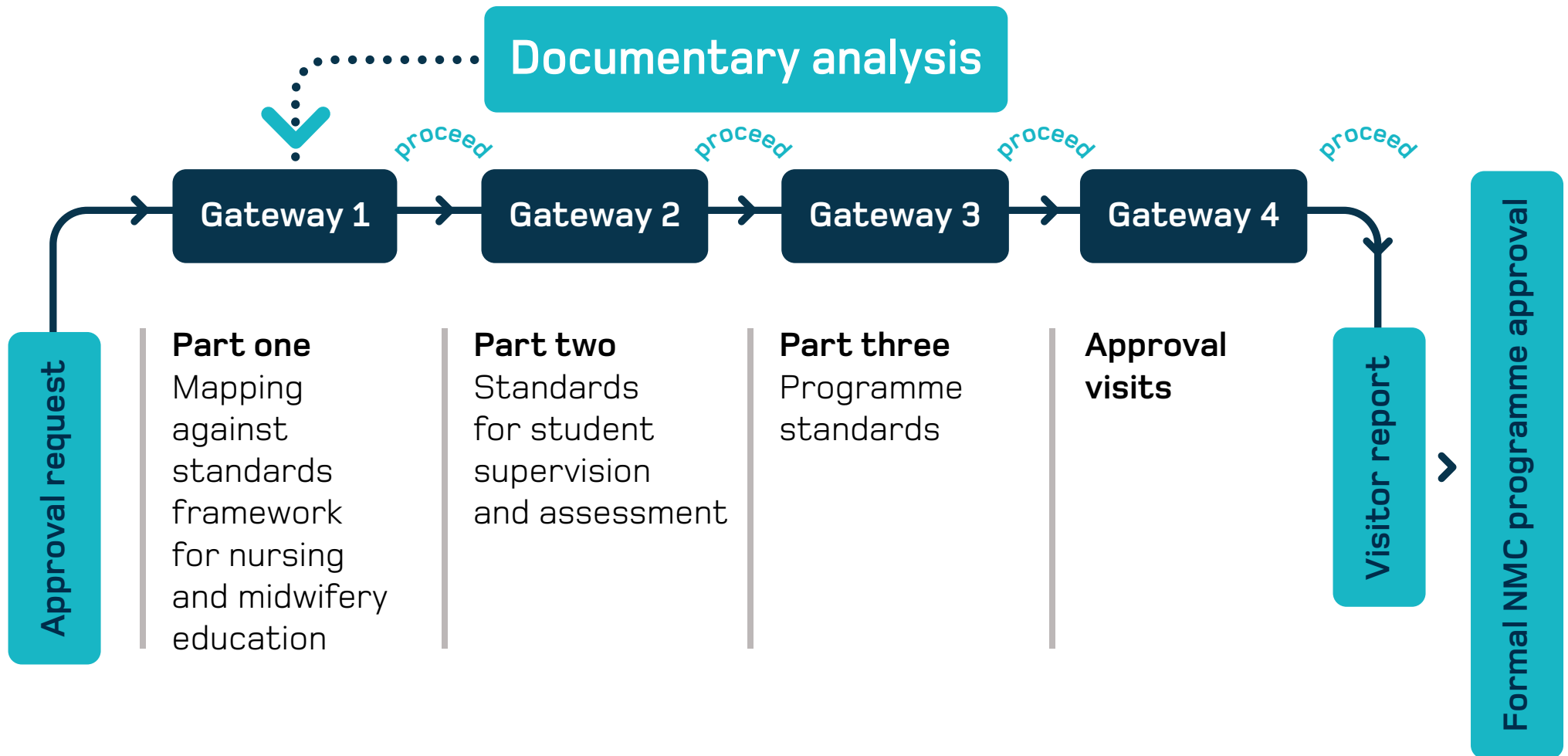
An education institution that's either new to nursing and midwifery education (or is wishing to return to nursing and midwifery education) and is seeking approval [must tell us in writing \(by email\)](#), setting [out a short proposal](#). Once we've had assurances about the education institution's proposal we'll begin our preliminary checks. We'll share this information with our QA delivery partner, Mott MacDonald, which will conduct the QA through the gateways on our behalf.

Under our new QA framework we'll approve programmes indefinitely, so programmes will not need to seek re-approval. However, we will proactively monitor institutions to ensure that our standards continue to be met.

Find out more about our QA processes in the [QA handbook](#).



Process of programme approval



Gateway 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

After we've screened their initial proposal, **new education institutions** must give us the necessary evidence for seeking approval of a programme for the first time. We'll review the evidence to ensure compliance, then the education institution will move to Gateway 2.

We'll ask **existing AEs** to give us evidence that demonstrates how they and their practice learning partners will meet Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.

- AEs proposing to run programmes in 2020 must submit the necessary evidence before **30 April 2019**.

All existing AEs can then proceed to Gateway 2.

Gateway 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment

All **existing AEs, new education institutions** and their practice learning partners will give us the evidence to tell us how they will meet these new standards. QA visitors will analyse the documents.

Existing AEs with programme approval visits booked before **28 February 2019** may submit their Gateway 2 and Gateway 3 evidence at the same time. However, no institution can proceed beyond Gateway 3 if these standards aren't met.

When we're satisfied that these standards have been met existing AEs and new education institutions can proceed to Gateway 3.

Gateway 3: Programme standards

All **existing AEs, new education institutions** and their practice learning partners will submit evidence to show how they will meet these new standards. During the 2018-2019 academic year we'll approve programmes against our new:

- *Standards for pre registration nursing education*
- *Standards for prescribing programmes*
- *Standards for pre registration nursing associate education*

Gateway 4: Approval visit

Representatives from **existing AEs** and **new education institutions** and their practice learning partners will come together for the approval visit. We also expect people and existing students (where applicable) to attend.

We aim to minimise the burden on AEs and their partners by taking part in joint approval visits with AEs and/or other regulators where possible, but we do so with clarity about our respective roles. QA visitors will engage with the presenting panel and representatives from the AE and its practice learning partners. They'll make recommendations to us in a report about whether our standards are met. We'll then decide whether to approve the programme.

Process of programme approval

	Gateway 1	Gateway 2	Gateway 3	Gateway 4
	Part one Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education	Part two Standards for student supervision and assessment	Part three Programme standards	Approval visits
1st programme approval New AEI	✓	✓	✓	✓
1st programme approval Existing AEIs	Right touch	✓	✓	✓
Subsequent approvals	N/A	Right touch	✓	✓

How we'll QA pre registration nursing programmes

As we have new *Standards of proficiency for registered nurses* and new *Standards for pre registration nursing programmes*, all existing AEIs that are approved to deliver a pre registration nursing programme must seek approval to deliver the programme against the new standards by September 2020.

This means the new gateway approach to pre registration nursing programme approval will apply to all AEIs. AEIs and practice learning partners will identify the routes within their pre registration nursing programme they're seeking to approve. This may include undergraduate, postgraduate, work based or apprenticeship routes.

Existing AEIs and their practice learning partners may want to transfer current student nurses onto the new programme. If so, they'll need to give us the evidence to support this proposed transfer at Gateway 3. QA visitors will look at the evidence to make sure it confirms how all standards will be met through the transfer. We also expect transferring students to engage with QA visitors during Gateway 4: Approval visit.

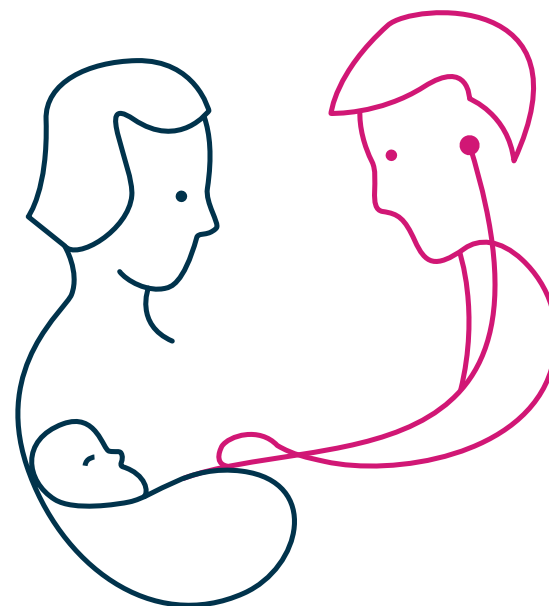
New education institutions who gain AEI status and existing AEIs who gain approval of a nursing programme for the first time will be subject to [new programme monitoring](#). This enhanced scrutiny will be in place from programme approval until the first group of students registers with us. This is because providers who are unknown to us present an extra degree of risk. New programme monitoring gives us the assurance we need about the how new programmes are progressing. This information will inform our approach to data driven based monitoring.

How we'll QA pre registration midwifery programmes

We're planning to publish the new *Standards of proficiency for midwives* in January 2020, at which point we'll be able to approve programmes against the new standards. However existing AEIs and practice learning partners can move to the new *Standards for student supervision and assessment* before 2020.

Normally we'd gather the evidence for this as part of Gateway 2 submission of evidence. This details their new organisation wide approach to student supervision and assessment across all their practice [learning environments](#) for all programmes we approve.

New education institutions that gain AEI status and existing AEIs that gain approval of a midwifery programme for the first time will be subject to new programme monitoring. This will take place from programme approval until the first group of students registers with us as described previously.

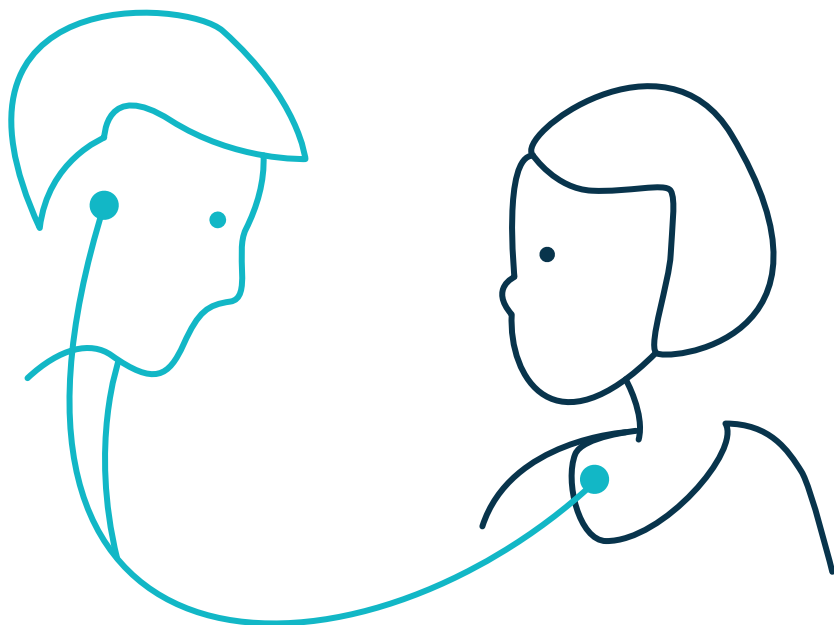


How we'll QA post registration programmes

Prescribing programmes

As we have new standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers and new [programme standards](#), all existing AEs and practice learning partners that are approved to deliver prescribing programmes must seek programme approval against the new standards before September 2020.

This means that the new gateway approach to prescribing programme approval (V100, V150 and V300) will apply to all AEs.



Specialist practice qualification programmes and specialist community public health nursing programmes

An independent organisation is evaluating all our other post registration standards. The evaluation findings will inform our plans for review and we will provide more details in 2019.

However existing AEs and practice learning partners can choose to move to the new *Standards for student supervision and assessment* for these programmes during 2018-2019 with full adoption by September 2020. Normally we'd gather the evidence for this as part of the Gateway 2.

Return to practice programmes

We plan to consult on our proposed approach to return to practice in autumn 2018.

We expect to publish our new approach in 2019 and so we'll provide more details early in 2019.

How we'll QA pre registration nursing associate programmes

We became the regulator for nursing associates in England on 12 July 2018. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales don't plan to use the new role at this time so our legislation reflects that we're regulating nursing associates only in England. One consequence is that we have powers in respect of nursing associate education in England only – we can't approve nursing associate programmes in other parts of the UK.

We have now published our *Standards of proficiency for nursing associates* and *Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes*. The *Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education* and the *Standards for student supervision and assessment* also apply for nursing associate programmes.

Our Council agreed that anyone successfully completing a pre-registration nursing associate programme should get a foundation degree. Therefore institutions applying for approval to run nursing associate programmes will have to have foundation degree-awarding powers, or have access to those powers through another foundation degree-awarding institution.

Nursing associate programmes have been piloted through partnerships involving several [stakeholders](#). We're happy to receive applications for the approval of programmes delivered through such partnerships, as long as the AEI awarding the qualification is prepared to be accountable for delivery.

Until we approve AEIs' pre-registration nursing associate programmes, AEIs that are part of a Health Education England-approved test site (or otherwise running a nursing associate apprenticeship programme) can enrol students on their current ('pre-regulation') nursing associate programmes until 26 July 2019. After this, students in England must join approved programmes to be eligible to join the nursing associate part of our register. These transitional arrangements are set out in our amended legislation.

AEIs may wish to transfer current trainee nursing associates that are part of a Health Education England (HEE) approved test site or a nursing associate apprenticeship programme onto the new NMC approved nursing associate programme. If this is the case they'd need to submit evidence to support this proposed transfer at Gateway 3. QA visitors will analyse the evidence to make sure that it verifies how this will be achieved and how all standards will be met. We also expect transferring students to engage with QA visitors during Gateway 4: Approval visit.

New education institutions who gain AEI status and existing AEIs who gain approval of a nursing associate programme for the first time will be subject to new programme monitoring. This will take place from programme approval until the first group of students registers with us. This is because providers who are unknown to us present an extra degree of risk. New programme monitoring gives us the assurance we need about the how new programmes are progressing. This information will inform our approach to data driven monitoring.

Programme modification

AEIs may submit requests for major modification to approved programmes. How we manage these depends on the extent of change as detailed in the QA handbook.

AEIs will manage and record minor modifications in case we need to review their decisions and their impact on our approval of the programme. We expect AEIs to report every year on their minor modification decisions.

Programme endorsement

AEIs may choose to deliver parts of approved programmes outside the UK.⁶ The UK-based AEI is accountable for this local delivery as part of their overall assurance to us.

We need robust evidence of how the programme meets our standards in all non-UK settings. This must include, but is not limited to, evidence of strategic and operational partnerships with practice learning partners, resources, risks and controls. The requirements for [endorsement](#) are in the QA handbook.

Refusal of approval

Education institutions and AEIs seeking approval of programmes must give us (and those who work on our behalf) the information and assistance that we may reasonably need.⁷ If an education institution or AEI seeking approval refuses a reasonable request for information we may refuse approval.⁸ Institutions and programmes must meet all of our standards for us to grant approval. We'll assess this at each of the gateways.



⁶ Article 15(7) of the Order

⁷ Article 17(4) of the Order

⁸ Article 18 of the Order

Withdrawing approval

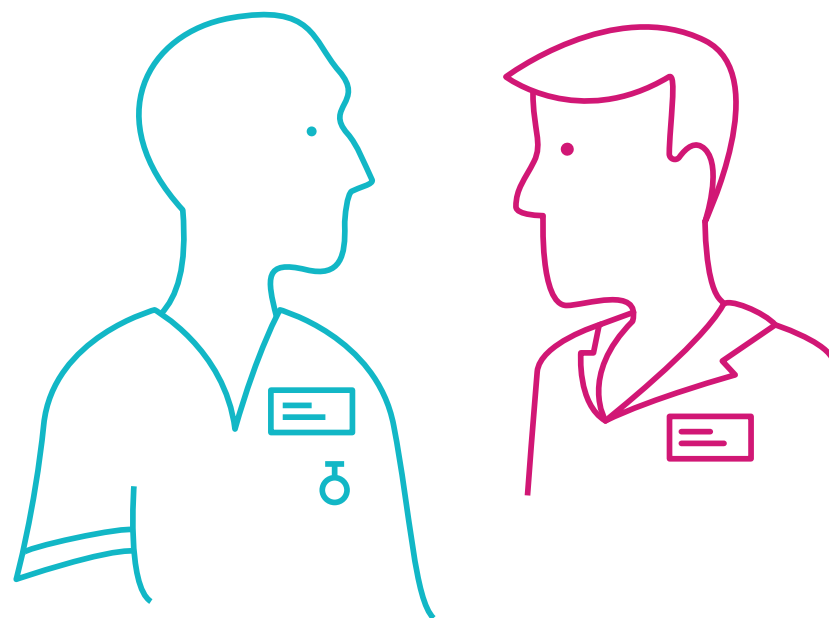
If an AEI or its practice learning partners aren't meeting (or won't meet) our standards or requirements, we may seek to withdraw the programme approval or AEI status.⁹ We may also seek to withdraw approval after we get a QA visitor's report.

Process

If we find that an AEI or its practice learning partners aren't meeting (or won't meet) our standards or requirements, we'll initially look for the AEI to put steps in place to address the concern. However, if a concern remains, we'll tell the AEI that we plan to withdraw their approval, specifying the extent of the withdrawal. We'll explain the reasons for withdrawing approval in writing. We'll give the AEI a month from the day we tell them of our plans to make any observations and objections.¹⁰

We'll take no further action until the deadline, or until the AEI submits any observations or objections. We'll acknowledge any correspondence we get within five working days.

If the AEI can't assure us that it's mitigating and managing the risks, we'll write to the AEI, specifying the date that we're withdrawing approval.



⁹ Article 18 of the Order
¹⁰ Article 18(4) of the Order

Programme monitoring

Monitoring review visits

During 2018-2019 we'll focus on programme approval so we won't do any routine monitoring visits. We think this is proportionate as we know that organisations and teams will be gearing up for new approvals and making plans to introduce our ambitious new standards. We will, however, respond to known or emerging risks to patient safety or compliance against our standards.

Annual self reporting

We expect all AEs and practice learning partners to continue to submit an annual self-assessment report and confirm that they continue to meet our standards across all approved programmes.

Thematic review reporting

During 2018-2019 we plan to build on our current approach to thematic reviews. This will add to our assurance about the implementation of our new standards.

Thematic reviews will focus on particular aspects of nursing and midwifery education and training. They enable us to gain a deeper understanding of issues and areas of good practice that we can disseminate when we engage and report on our QA activity.

New programme monitoring

This applies to new AEs and AEs delivering new pre-registration programmes that have not been run by that institution before.

We'll apply new programme monitoring from approval of the programme until the first group of students register with us. This is because new providers who are unknown to us present a degree of additional risk. As part of new programme monitoring, we'll ask for regular updates that tell us how the new programmes are progressing. We'll follow up on these updates. This information will inform our future approach to risk based monitoring. If concerns arise we'll take action in line with our published processes and might proceed to an [extraordinary review](#).

Enhanced scrutiny

When we have a concern regarding an AE or a programme we may apply enhanced scrutiny. As part of this enhanced scrutiny, we'll ask for regular updates that tell us how the AE is addressing the issues we have raised with them. We'll follow up on these updates. This information will inform our future approach to risk based monitoring. If further concerns or complaints arise we'll take action in line with our published processes and might proceed to an extraordinary review.

Extraordinary reviews

If someone raises concerns, a serious incident takes place, or our intelligence suggests that an AE or a programme is no longer meeting our standards and requirements, we might carry out an extraordinary review. The review will identify if the AE and its practice learning partners continue to meet our standards.

If the review finds concerns then we'll expect the AE and its practice learning partners to put an action plan in place to mitigate these concerns. We have the power to withdraw approval for an AE or programme if the actions fail to address these concerns.

Delivery of QA of education

Our role includes:

- setting the strategic direction and policy for QA of education, ensuring that people are at the centre of QA, and approving the QA handbook
- commissioning and overseeing effective and proportionate QA operational delivery
- approving, monitoring and withdrawing approval of programmes
- effectively using data and intelligence from wide ranging sources to inform QA that protects the public
- sharing intelligence from QA activity appropriately with others both within and outside the NMC
- using our evidence from QA activity to influence the strategic context for education to enhance public protection and strengthen stakeholder relations.

Our operational delivery partner's role includes:

- recruiting, training and managing the performance of our QA visitors
- scheduling and organising QA processes and visits
- sharing and updating the information and documentation that govern QA processes, including the QA handbook, their website and QA portal and hub
- seeking the views of people – including the public, patients, service users, carers, families and students
- supplying and maintaining data relating to AEs and practice learning partners and reporting to us.

How we use data

We may collect information about individuals if they work for an AEI or practice learning partner, or take part in our education QA processes.

We'll collect the individual's name and contact information. If they're taking part in one of our QA visits we'll also collect details of their professional experience.

During QA reviews, education institutions and practice learning partners may give the visitors a significant amount of supporting documentation. This documentation sometimes contains personal information like the CVs of academic staff or minutes of meetings. The only people who'll read this personal information are those who need to see it as part of our QA activity. We occasionally share personal information with third parties.

Normally, we process personal information because we have a legal obligation to do so or because it is necessary for the exercise of our statutory functions or any other functions in the public interest.

- Read our [privacy notice](#)
- Read the [education and standards information handling guidance](#).

How we report on QA

We publish [a list of approved programmes](#).¹¹ We [also publish monitoring reports](#), and we share an [annual report on QA](#) with our Council.

We'll publish our QA approval outcome summaries as part of our commitment to transparency and information sharing.

¹¹ Article 18 of the Order

Responding to concerns in nursing and midwifery education

One aim for the QA of education is to make sure that people are protected when students care for them as part of their education and training. To protect the public, we act on concerns when someone raises them to us.

In this context a concern could be:

- an incident that may affect patient safety
- a notification that an AEI or practice learning partner that delivers approved nursing and midwifery programmes is not meeting our standards
- whistleblowing, or
- a complaint.

The need to protect the public guides how we respond to concerns. We assess the nature of possible risks, and combine that with the assurance we receive from AEIs and practice learning partners about how they manage risks when they arise. Our response to concerns ensures that there are measures in place to protect the public when issues affect nursing or midwifery education.



How we respond to concerns

Exceptional reporting by AEs and practice learning partners

When risks emerge AEs and their practice learning partners must respond swiftly to manage and control risks appropriately.

AEs should [email](#) exceptional reports to us. We'll take action when these risks are not being effectively managed and controlled locally.

Whistleblowing

If a third party raises a concern about the safe and effective delivery of an approved programme, we'll tell the AEI concerned within five working days so it can manage the risk locally where possible. We'll also contact the third party to make sure we understand the risk and information correctly.

Where appropriate, we'll redirect any concerns about systems or practice to system regulators, our fitness to practise teams, or other professional regulators.

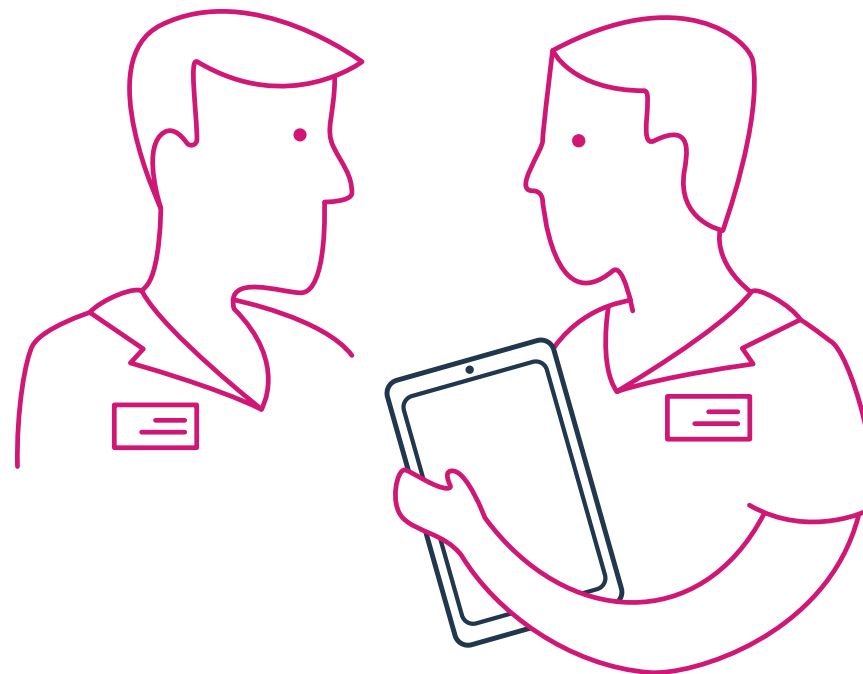
Our duties around managing and acting on information provided through whistleblowing are set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Responding to concerns and handling complaints about AEs

We'll investigate and, if necessary, act on concerns raised about AEs. We deal with concerns and complaints fairly and consistently.

Responding to concerns and handling complaints about our QA delivery partner, Mott MacDonald

We'll investigate and, where appropriate, act upon concerns raised about our QA delivery partner. We'll make sure that we deal with concerns and complaints fairly and consistently. We won't consider complaints regarding the judgment of QA visitors delivering QA activity.



Glossary

Approved education institutions (AEIs): the status awarded to an institution, part of an institution, or a combination of institutions that work in partnership with practice learning providers after we've approved a programme. AEIs will have assured us that they're accountable and capable of delivering approved education programmes.

Education institutions: institutions seeking our approval of a programme.

Educators: in the context of our standards for education and training, educators are those who deliver, support, supervise and assess theory or practice learning.

Employer link service (ELS): Our ELS liaises with employers, listens to feedback, takes part in local health sector forums, advises on making referrals, and offers inductions for directors of nursing on fitness to practise and other core functions.

Enhanced scrutiny: A process to allow the AEI to demonstrate how they have addressed issues raised with them or their programme and how they continue to meet the standards and requirements.

Endorsement: This is the process of approving the delivery of part of an already approved programme outside the UK.

Extraordinary reviews: Reviews conducted to identify if the AEI and practice placements continue to meet our standards, if concerns or intelligence suggest that an AEI or a programme is no longer meeting our standards and requirements.

HEI portal: the website used to submit student confirmation and completion of approved programme details.

Learning environments: Includes any physical location where learning takes place as well as the system of shared values, beliefs and behaviours in these places.

New programme monitoring: A process to allow the AEI to demonstrate how they and their programmes meet the standards and requirements. New institutions and new pre-registration programmes will undergo new programme monitoring from approval through to the first group of students completing the programme.

Nurse and midwife prescribing programmes: The programme that a registered nurse or midwife in the UK completes to acquire the proficiencies needed to meet our criteria for an annotation on our register.

Nursing associate: A nursing associate is a new member of the nursing team who will care for, and support people. This role is being used and regulated in England and it's intended to address a skills gap between health and care assistants and registered nurses.

Nursing associate is a stand-alone role in its own right and will provide a progression route into graduate level nursing.

Nursing degree apprenticeship: The nursing degree apprenticeship will enable people to train to become a graduate registered nurse through an apprentice route. Apprentices will be released by their employer to study part-time in an AEI and will train in a range of practice learning settings. They will be expected to achieve the same standards as other student nurses.

People: individuals or groups who receive services from nurses, midwives, or nursing associates, healthy and sick people, parents, children, families, carers, representatives, also including educators and students and other within and outside the learning environment.

Pre registration nursing programme: The programme that a midwifery student in the UK completes to acquire the proficiencies needed to meet our criteria for registration.

Pre registration nursing associate programme: The programme that a nursing associate student in the UK completes to acquire the proficiencies needed to meet our criteria for registration.

Pre registration midwifery programme: The programme that a midwifery student in the UK completes to acquire the proficiencies needed to meet our criteria for registration.

Programme standards: The standards we set for all nursing, midwifery and nursing associate programmes.

Professional Standards

Authority (PSA): The independent body that helps to protect the public through their work with organisations that register and regulate people working in health and social care. They regulate the NMC along with other health and social care regulators.

Quality assurance (QA): Our processes for making sure all AEs and their approved education programmes comply with our standards.

Regulatory intelligence unit (RIU): Our RIU is responsible for identifying and assessing regulatory risk. It makes decisions on escalating this within the NMC and to external stakeholders where required.

Stakeholders: Any person, group or organisation that has an interest or concern in the situation in question, and may affect or be affected by its actions, objectives or policies. In the context of our standards for education and training this includes students, educators, partner organisations, patients, families, carers, employers, other professionals, other regulators and education commissioners.

Students: Anyone enrolled onto an approved education programme.

The Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (the Order):

Legislation that establishes us and sets out our primary purpose of protecting the public, our structure, and our functions and activities.

The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

What we do

We regulate nurses, midwives and nursing associates in the UK. We exist to protect the public. We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that professionals can deliver high quality care throughout their careers.

We make sure nurses, midwives and nursing associates keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our standards.

We have clear and transparent processes to investigate those who fall short of our standards. We maintain a register of the nurses, midwives and nursing associates allowed to practise in the UK.

