

NMC programme of change for education

Overview of education consultation

Introduction

1. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the independent nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We exist to protect the public. We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality care throughout their careers.
2. The legal basis for our education and quality assurance of education role is set out in the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001,¹ and the education and registration rules and requirements on the education of nurses and midwives found in relevant EU legislation.²
3. Our Strategy 2015-2020 identifies education as a key priority. In 2016 we began a four year programme of change for education to ensure that both our standards of proficiency, which set out what nurses and midwives must know and be able to do safely and our standards of education and training ensure that nursing and midwifery programmes are designed and delivered to give nurses and midwives the skills and knowledge that they will need to be able to meet the challenges of the future.
4. This consultation focuses on the work undertaken since 2016. It includes the development of new standards of proficiency for future registered nurses.
5. We have sought to review, consolidate and reform our education requirements across all of our current education and training standards in developing a new education framework. This new framework will provide the education and training standards that underpins all aspects of nursing and midwifery education delivery and management. This includes practice settings across all nursing and midwifery programmes.

6. The new draft requirements for learning and assessment are set out within the draft education framework. The standards for education and training stated within the education framework will be quality assured within the new QA framework that Council will decide on later in 2017.
7. We have developed new programme requirements specifically for nurse education programmes.

Our vision for education

Drivers for change

8. Our Corporate strategy 2016-20 offers the opportunity to reposition ourselves as a proactive and forward thinking regulator, playing a lead role in modernising education standards for future nurses and midwives. This reflects our aspiration to be a dynamic regulator.
9. Our programme for change for education is driven by the rapid pace of change across the health and care and education sectors across the UK. In order to be fit for the future, our standards need to change to ensure public safety and confidence.
10. Our role in education must always be proportionate. As we look to the future, this means upholding public protection building on the success of Revalidation and moving towards a more ambitious approach to our standards development through greater collaboration with other regulators.
11. Nurse and midwife education has received attention from a number of high profile reports across the four countries in recent years,³ and it is important that we respond to the lessons learned in a proactive manner. In response to one such report, the Francis Inquiry, we commissioned an independent evaluation⁴ into our Standards for pre-registration nurse education, our Standards for pre-registration midwifery education, and our Standards for learning and assessment in practice.
12. Key findings from our independent evaluation included the need to improve the confidence of newly registered nurses and midwives as they start their careers, particularly in some aspects of delivering technical skills; the need to bring forward a number of higher level skills and proficiencies into our standards and the need to address variable quality and consistency in practice placements and mentorship. It is vital that our new standards address these areas if they are to prepare nurses and midwives that are fit for the future.

13. We have risen to the opportunities presented by developing new standards of proficiency and education and training that are outcome-focused, proportionate, capable of being flexible in delivery, and that ultimately prepare future nurses and midwives for safe and effective practice when they register with us.
14. We need an approach to nurse and midwife education that allows education institutions and their practice placement partners to deliver programmes in creative and innovative ways that offers a range of approved full time and flexible modes of study.
15. An increase in potential routes onto the register, such as nurse apprenticeships and the advent of the nursing associate role in England, which our Council recently agreed to regulate, will also impact on the delivery of education in the future. Regardless of mode of study or route of entry to the register, all students need an increased knowledge base, and higher level skills and proficiencies that will prepare them to meet the needs of the people and their families and carers they care for both now and in the future.

Developing Standards that are fit for the future

16. We will separate the proficiencies that students need to have when they register with us, from the education and training standards and programme requirements for institutions and their practice placement partners, which will be held within a new education framework. Both our new standards of proficiency and the education framework that contains the education and training standards will be clear, specific, outcome focused and accessible to the public.
17. Our standards of proficiency will prepare students with higher level knowledge, skills and proficiencies and will ensure that they are confident and equipped to work flexibly across a range of settings. There is an urgent need to ensure that nurses and midwives are informed and prepared with the full range of skills to work in ever more complex roles. An increasing focus on health promotion, public health, a progressive agenda to integrate health and social care, and a shift towards care closer to home, will underpin the care delivery of the future. As nurses and midwives take on increasing levels of responsibility, working across inter-agency and multi-disciplinary teams, we must ensure that our role in setting standards empowers them to meet these challenges while still ensuring compassionate, person centred care, instilling public confidence and ensuring public protection.

18. We must ensure that our standards of education and training facilitate learning and achievement to take place in both theory and practice settings which will allow our new proficiencies to be met. Our new education and training standards contained within the education framework seek to address those elements of our standards which are over burdensome, moving away from a focus on processes and detail as far as possible, in order to allow those institutions and partners that deliver our programmes the necessary flexibility and agility to respond to changing needs.
19. Our new standards will also ensure that in the future we are able to work more closely with others, including other regulators and professional bodies. We recognise that we operate in an often crowded regulatory environment and this can be burdensome for education providers and their practice partners. Our new standards will be designed to promote inter-professional learning and lead the way in maximising collaborative working across regulators.

Our consultation on the programme of change for education

Pre-consultation engagement

20. We have been clear that we cannot develop these standards in isolation, and before the launch of this consultation, we engaged extensively with nurses and midwives, educators, students, employers, other regulators and patients and the public, from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We have taken a collaborative and co-production approach to our education programme, using feedback to shape our thinking and inform the design of our new standards of proficiency and of education and training. We would like to thank all those that have shared their thinking with us or attended one of our events.
21. Our programme of change for education is driven by the belief that in order to be fit for the future, our standards need to change. Inevitably some areas of change will be welcomed and other areas of change may be met with uncertainty or, equally, aspects that have not yet emerged. Where there has been a clear consensus regarding our proposals we have sought to embed that consensus within the draft standards. We intend to use this consultation to seek further feedback on draft standards on broad areas of people and patient safety and public protection, as well as those areas where further views are needed. Some areas where a number of differing views have been expressed include:
 - 21.1 Our proposals to bring the underpinning theory relating to prescribing into pre-registration nursing.
 - 21.2 The extent to which we remove details about process from our standards of education and training.
 - 21.3 Our draft new model of learning and assessment.

- 22. For the first time we have subjected our draft standards of proficiency for the future registered nurse, and also our education framework, to an independent process of user testing to ensure that users will find them accessible, inclusive, assessable and fit for purpose. These findings have fed into the latest drafts that we will consult on now.
- 23. We intend to continue to engage with our stakeholders as the consultation gets underway and development of the standards progresses.

Areas we are consulting on at this time

- 24. We have finished our pre-consultation engagement and have now progressed to the consultation phase which will allow us to formally test our thinking. The projects that we are consulting on at this time are as follows:
 - 24.1 Draft standards of proficiency for the future registered nurse.
 - 24.2 A new education framework that will provide:
 - 24.2.1 The education and training governance standards relating to all learning in theory and practice, including new requirements for learning and assessment.
 - 24.2.2 Draft programme requirements to underpin the draft standards of proficiency for the future registered nurse.

Equality and diversity

- 25. We are carrying out a full equality impact assessment process for each project that falls within our education programme. As part of this process, we have highlighted any changes that we believe may have the potential impact negatively from an equality and diversity perspective, and the actions we must take to mitigate against any potential to negative impacts.
- 26. This consultation is part of our equality impact assessment process. During this process we will be looking at action we can take to make sure that equality and diversity is embedded in all areas across our standards.
- 27. Following your review of the consultation documents and proposed standards we would welcome your thoughts in relation to any aspects of equality and diversity that these standards could impact upon, any actions that we would need to take to mitigate against such risk, and where you think we could do more to meet our duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups within our regulatory role. We have included a section at the end of this document that specifically seeks your views on the equality and diversity implications of our proposals.

Proposed timescales

- 28. We aim to publish our standards of proficiency for the future registered nurse in spring 2018. There will be an 'early adoption' option for these proficiencies to be included for programmes commencing in September 2018. All education providers will be expected to have adopted the draft standards of proficiency by September 2019.
- 29. We aim to publish our new education framework and the programme requirements for the future registered nurse in spring 2018. All education providers will be expected to have adopted the new education framework and future nurse programme requirements by September 2019.

Navigating your way through the consultation documents

30. To assist people who would like to respond to our proposals we have arranged this important consultation over two key areas. For each of these areas, we have compiled a short document setting out the background to our proposed changes, and the key questions that we would like your views on. You will find these documents by following the links below:

30.1 *[The standards of proficiency for registered nurses](#)*

30.2 *[Our new education framework – education and training standards for nursing and midwifery education.](#)*

31. We recommend that you read the documents above in conjunction with our proposed new standards of proficiency and our new standards of education and training including our proposed new programme requirements. These can be found by following the links below:

31.1 *[Draft standards of proficiency for the future registered nurse.](#)*

31.2 *[Draft education framework](#)*, which includes:

31.2.2 *[Our proposed new model of learning and assessment.](#)*

31.2.3 *[Programme requirements for the future registered nurse.](#)*

Consultation questions

- 32. We are asking a wide range of questions as part of this consultation. The majority of these questions are posed for the specific areas previously described. To view and respond to each of the specific areas project consultation questions, these can be found by following the links above as part of 'project documents' section.
- 33. We also have a series of questions that sit across the programme in respect of our broad programme of work in education. These are set out below and will be asked as part of the consultation survey in addition to those questions contained within our project documents.

Next steps and how to respond

34. This consultation will run from 13 June 2017 until 12 September 2017.
To respond to this consultation, please complete the consultation survey.
After the consultation has closed, we will analyse your responses and use these to inform our next steps in the development process. We will then present our findings to our Council in 2018 with a recommendation for how to proceed.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this important consultation.

Programme of change for education – equality and diversity and inclusion questions

Q1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

☐ As an individual. *If yes go to Q2*

☐ On behalf of an organisation. *If yes go to Q14*

Responding as an individual

Q2. Please tick which one of the following best applies to you:

☐ I am a member of the public. *If yes go to Q6*

☐ I am a nurse or a midwife. *If yes go to Q3*

☐ I am a student nurse or a student midwife. *If yes go to Q5*

Nurses and midwives only

Q3. Which of the following categories best describes your current practice?

Tick one or more areas that best describe the area you practise in

☐ Direct patient care

☐ Management

☐ Education

☐ Policy

☐ Research

☐ Other *(please give details)*

Q4. Please tick one or more box(es) which best describes the type of organisation you work for:

- ☐ Government department or public body
- ☐ Regulatory body
- ☐ Professional organisation or trade union
- ☐ NHS employer of doctors, nurses or midwives
- ☐ Independent sector employer of nurses and midwives,
- ☐ Agency for nurses or midwives
- ☐ Education provider
- ☐ Consumer or patient organisation
- ☐ Other (*please give details*)

Q5. Please tick the box(es) below that most closely reflect(s) your role?

- ☐ Adult nurse
- ☐ Mental health nurse
- ☐ Learning disabilities nurse
- ☐ Children's nurse
- ☐ Specialist community public health nurse
- ☐ Health visitor
- ☐ Occupational health nurse
- ☐ School nurse
- ☐ Family health nurse
- ☐ Specialist practice nurse
- ☐ District nurse
- ☐ General practice nurse
- ☐ Midwife
- ☐ Student nurse
- ☐ Student midwife
- ☐ Other (*please give details*)

All individuals

To help make sure that our consultations reflect the views of the diverse UK population, we aim to monitor the types of responses we receive to each consultation and over a series of consultations. Although we will use this information in the analysis of the consultation response, it will not be linked to your response in the reporting process.

Q6. What is your country of residence?

- ☐ England
- ☐ Northern Ireland
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ Other – European Economic Area
- ☐ Other – rest of the world (*please say where*)

Q7. What is your age (years)? (please tick only one box)

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44
- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55–64
- ☐ 65 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q8. Are you:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q9. Please select one option to indicate whether your gender identity completely matches the sex you were registered at birth:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q10. Please indicate your sexual orientation (please tick only one box)

- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay man
- ☐ Gay woman or lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual or straight
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q11. What is your ethnic origin? (please tick one)

White

- ☐ White
- ☐ British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish traveller
- ☐ Any other white background (*please specify*)

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other mixed or multiple ethnic group (*please specify*)

Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background *(please specify)*

More options overleaf...

Black, African, Caribbean or black British

- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African
- ☐ Any other black, African, or Caribbean background *(please specify)*

Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Any other ethnic group *(please specify)*

Q12. Would you describe yourself as having a disability*? (please tick only one box)

*Disability in this context means a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q13. Please indicate your religion (please tick only one box)

- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Any other religion (*please specify*)

Responding as an organisation

Q14. Which one of the following categories best describes your organisation?

- ☐ Government department or public body
- ☐ Regulatory body
- ☐ Professional organisation or trade union
- ☐ NHS employer of doctors, nurses or midwives
- ☐ Independent sector employer of nurses and midwives,
- ☐ Agency for nurses or midwives
- ☐ Education provider
- ☐ Consumer or patient organisation
- ☐ Other (*please give details*)

Q15. Does your organisation represent the views of nurses or midwives and/or the public that share the following characteristics? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Older
- ☐ Younger
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Ethnic groups
- ☐ Women/men
- ☐ Lesbian, gay and bisexual
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Pregnancy/maternity

Q16. In which country is your organisation based?

- ☐ UK wide
- ☐ England
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ Northern Ireland
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ Other – European Economic Area
- ☐ Other – rest of the world (*please say where*)

Q17. Please give the name of your organisation

Q18. Would you be happy for your comments in this consultation to be identified and attributed to your organisation in the reporting, or would you prefer that your response remains anonymous?

- ☐ Happy for comments to be attributed to my organisation
- ☐ Please keep my responses anonymous

Q19. Please state your name

Q20. Please state your job title

Programme of change for education – Impact Assessment

The proposed new standards of proficiency, standards of education and training, and our proposals to withdraw our standards for medicine management should not create unlawful barriers or create disadvantage for diverse groups on the basis of: race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, political belief or being in a marriage/civil-partnership. Will any of our proposals have a particular impact on these groups across the following categories?

IMQ1. Race:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ2. Gender:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ3. Disability:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ4. Religion and belief:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ5. Sexuality orientation:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ6. Age:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ7. Gender reassignment:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ8. Pregnancy / maternity:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ9. Political belief:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

IMQ10. Being in a marriage or civil partnership:

- ☐ Yes – largely positive impact anticipated
- ☐ Yes – largely negative impact anticipated
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments

End notes

1. Statutory Instrument 2002/253 (as amended)
2. Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council
3. Francis (2010) *Independent inquiry into care provided by Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust*; Kirkup (2015) *The Report of the Morecambe Bay investigation*
4. IFF Research (2015) *Evaluation of the NMC pre-registration standards: summary report*