

EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

For all United Kingdom providers of nursing and midwifery education



The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

What we do

We regulate nurses and midwives in 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 healthcare throughout their careers.

We make sure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards. We have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards. We maintain a register of nurses and midwives allowed to practise in the UK.

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About the education framework

This document sets out the education and training standards which all approved education institutions (AEIs), practice placement and work based learning providers must meet in order to manage and deliver all NMC approved education programmes.

The safety of people is central to these standards, as students will be in contact with people, families and carers throughout their education and training.

We set out the professional values and behaviour of all nurses and midwives working in the UK in the Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives. We expect student nurses and midwives to meet these standards.

The education framework contains the standards and requirements that together signify what effective professional education and training looks like. Details of how we will ensure these education and training standards are met are set out in our Quality Assurance (QA) Framework document. We will only approve and maintain approval of programmes of education and training where:

- 1.** the learning culture is ethical, open and honest, and is conducive to safe and effective learning that respects the principles of equality and diversity and where innovation, inter-professional learning and team working are embedded
- 2.** accountability for compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements is met
- 3.** students are empowered and provided with the learning opportunities they need in a range of settings, using a variety of methods to achieve the desired programme outcomes and NMC proficiencies
- 4.** those who deliver, support, supervise and assess students are suitably qualified, prepared and skilled; and receive the necessary support for their role, and
- 5.** curricula and assessment methods enable students to achieve the outcomes required to practise safely and effectively in their chosen area.

Overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of quality lies with AEs in partnership with practice-placement and work placed learning partners who offer 'hands on' practice experience to students. Through our quality assurance processes we make sure that education programmes meet our standards and that risks are managed effectively. The NMC uses a variety of sources to monitor risks to quality in education and training, including system regulator reports.

Our education framework and the new requirements for learning and assessment provide flexibility for approved education institutions, practice placement and work placed learning providers in developing innovative approaches to education for nurses and midwives while being accountable for the local delivery and management of NMC approved programmes in line with our standards.

Specific detail about regulatory requirements for the delivery of individual programmes will be included in separate programme requirement standards. These standards will give due consideration to legal requirements, entry requirements, availability of recognition of prior learning, length of programme and assessment.

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Five pillars for education and training

Our standards for approved education institutions, practice placement and work placed learning partners are set out in five pillars that define effective education and development, delivery and management of programmes. Each standard is underpinned by a set of requirements, all of which must be met for the standard to be met as a whole.

These standards and their underpinning requirements apply to the development, delivery and management of all programmes approved by the NMC. They apply to theoretical learning that takes place in the classroom and also to practice placement and work placed learning.

Education and training pillars

Each pillar of the education framework focuses on a specific aspect of education and training as set out below.

Pillar 1: Learning culture

Prioritising safety and valuing learning in all settings

Pillar 2: Educational governance and quality

Compliance and continuous improvement in educational delivery and management

Pillar 3: Student learning and empowerment

Supporting and enabling students to achieve their learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies

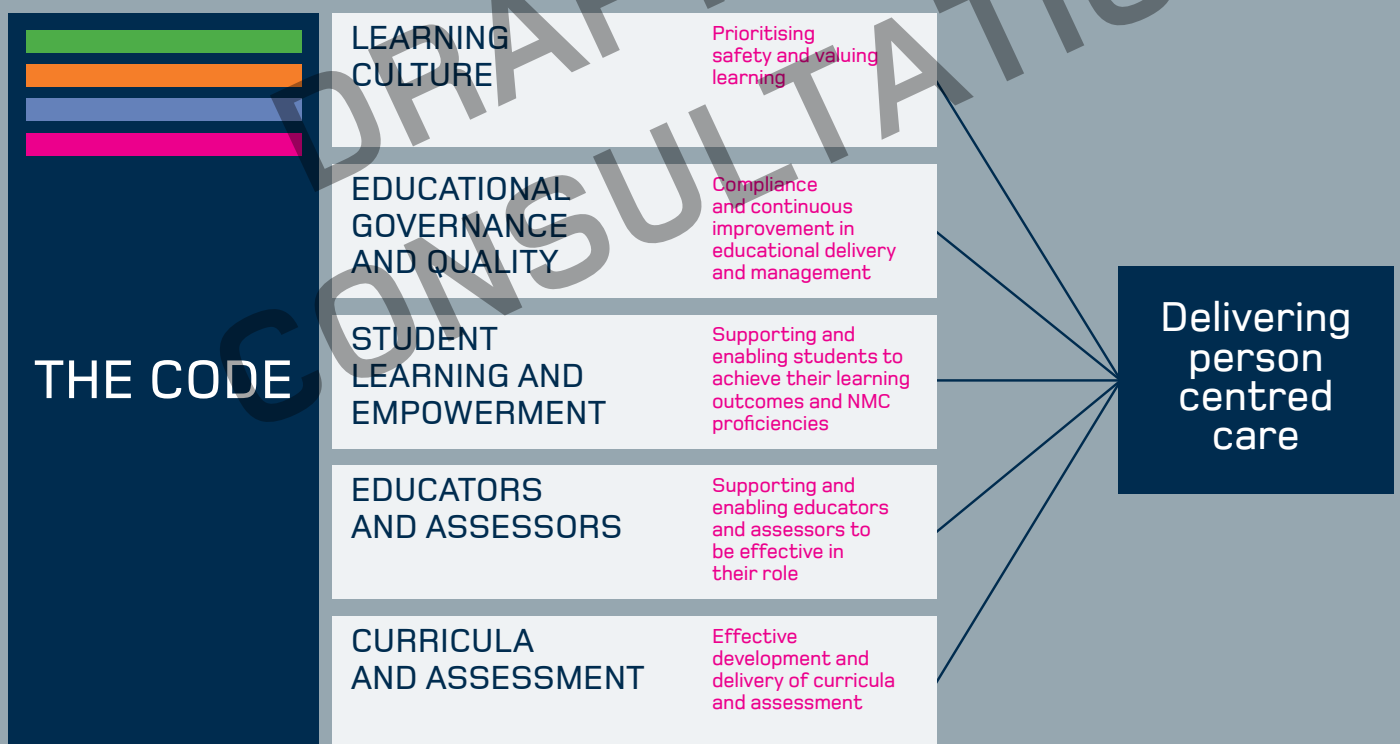
Pillar 4: Educators and assessors

Supporting and enabling supervisors, educators and assessors to be effective in their roles

Pillar 5: Curricula and assessment

Effective development and delivery of curricula and confirmation of proficiency through robust assessment.

Diagram: Five pillars for education and training



Pillar 1:

Learning culture

Standards

- S1.1** The learning culture prioritises the safety of people, including carers, students and educators, and enables the values of the Code to be upheld.
- S1.2** Education and training is valued in all learning environments.

Requirements

Safe learning

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must:

- R1.1** demonstrate that safety of people is a primary consideration in all learning environments
- R1.2** prioritise the wellbeing of people promoting critical self-reflection and safe practice in accordance with the Code
- R1.3** ensure people have the opportunity to give and if required withdraw their informed consent to being cared for by students
- R1.4** ensure students and educators understand how to raise concerns¹ and are encouraged and supported to do so without fear of adverse consequences
- R1.5** ensure any concerns are investigated and dealt with effectively
- R1.6** ensure concerns affecting the wellbeing of service users or students are addressed immediately and effectively

R1.7 ensure mistakes and incidents are fully investigated and learning reflections are recorded and disseminated, and

R1.8 ensure students are encouraged to be open and honest with service users and carers when things go wrong, in accordance with the professional duty of candour.²

Valuing learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must:

R1.9 ensure the learning culture is fair, impartial, transparent and compliant with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion

R1.10 promote programme improvement through effective use of student diversity and outcomes data

R1.11 seek and act upon feedback from students, educators, service users and carers to make improvements to programme design, delivery and management

R1.12 work with service providers to promote and model inter professional learning and working, and

R1.13 support opportunities for research collaboration and evidence-based improvement in education and service provision.

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Pillar 2: Educational governance and quality

Standards

- S2.1** Approved education institutions and their practice placement and work placed partners have effective governance systems that ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for meeting those requirements and responding when standards are not met.
- S2.2** Approved education institutions and their practice placement and work placed partners optimise safety and ensure quality, taking account of the diverse needs of, and working in partnership with, students, service users, carers and all other stakeholders.

Requirements

Governance and accountability

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must:

- R2.1** comply with all relevant legal,³ regulatory, professional and educational requirements
- R2.2** adopt a partnership approach with shared responsibility for theory and practice learning and assessment, including clear lines of communication and accountability for the development, delivery and evaluation of their programmes
- R2.3** ensure that student recruitment and selection is open, fair and transparent

- R2.4** ensure that student recruitment and selection involve representatives from relevant stakeholder groups, including a diverse range of service users and carers
- R2.5** demonstrate a robust process for recognition of prior learning and how it has been mapped to the programme learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies⁴
- R2.6** ensure students are fully informed of the requirement to declare immediately any cautions and/or convictions, pending charges or outstanding disciplinary issues with current or previous employers and that any declarations are dealt with promptly and fairly
- R2.7** ensure students fulfil the NMC's health and character requirements⁵ on entering the programme, throughout the programme and when recording their award on the register. This includes satisfactory occupational health assessment and criminal record checks
- R2.8** provide students with the information and support they require in the learning environments to enable them to understand and comply with relevant governance processes and policies
- R2.9** have robust, effective, fair and impartial fitness to practise procedures to swiftly address concerns about the conduct of students that might compromise public safety and protection
- R2.10** confirm that students meet the NMC proficiencies in full, demonstrating their fitness for practice and eligibility for academic and professional award, and
- R2.11** provide information and evidence required by regulators.

Safety and quality assurance

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must:

- R2.12** provide assurance that the learning environments are safe and effective
- R2.13** have the capacity, facilities and resources in place to deliver safe and effective learning opportunities and practical experiences for students as required by their programme learning outcomes
- R2.14** comply with the education framework for all periods of learning undertaken outside the UK
- R2.15** improve quality, manage risk and disseminate effective practice through the proactive seeking and appropriate sharing of information and data
- R2.16** proactively identify and act on any areas for improvement, regularly measuring programme performance and outcomes against the NMC's standards and requirements,⁶ and other recognised quality frameworks in education, and
- R2.17** appoint appropriately qualified and experienced people for programme delivery and identify nurses and midwives as programme leaders⁷ who are accountable for ensuring that all NMC proficiencies have been met by each student by the end of their programme.

Pillar 3: Student learning and empowerment

Standards

- S3.1** Students are provided with a variety of learning opportunities and appropriate resources which enable them to achieve their programme learning outcomes, NMC proficiencies and be capable of demonstrating the professional behaviours in the Code.
- S3.2** Students are empowered and supported to become resilient, caring, reflective and lifelong learners who are capable of working in inter-professional and multi-agency teams.

Requirements

Provision of learning opportunities and support

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must ensure that all students:

- R3.1** have their diverse needs respected and taken into account, with support and reasonable adjustments provided in accordance with equality and disability legislation and good practice
- R3.2** have access to the resources they need to achieve the learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies required for their professional role
- R3.3** are well prepared for both theory and practice learning having received relevant inductions
- R3.4** are provided with timely and accurate information about curriculum, teaching, assessment, practice placements and other information relevant to their programme

- R3.5** are enabled to learn using a range of methods, including technology-enhanced and simulation-based learning appropriate for their programme
- R3.6** have opportunities throughout their programme to collaborate and learn with other professionals, to learn with and from peers, and to develop mentoring and leadership skills
- R3.7** have supported learning time when in practice
- R3.8** are supervised and supported in practice learning by practice supervisors⁸ who are suitably prepared registered health and social care professionals with current knowledge and experience
- R3.9** have opportunities throughout their programme to learn in a variety of practice settings and interact with a range of service users, preparing them to provide care to people with diverse needs
- R3.10** are supported by individuals and teams in theory and practice learning environments according to their individual learning needs, competence, confidence and experience
- R3.11** are provided with the learning and pastoral support to empower them to prepare for independent, reflective professional practice
- R3.12** receive constructive feedback throughout the programme from a range of relevant stakeholders, including service users and carers to aid reflective learning
- R3.13** are assigned and have access to, a nominated practice assessor in addition to a nominated academic assessor for each part of the programme
- R3.14** have the necessary support and information to manage any interruptions to the study of programmes for any reasons, and
- R3.15** are provided with timely and accurate information regarding entry to NMC registration or annotation of their award.

Student empowerment

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must ensure that all students:

- R3.16** are provided with information and support which encourages them to take responsibility for their own physical and mental health and wellbeing
- R3.17** have opportunities throughout their programme to give feedback on the quality of all aspects of their learning in both theory and practice, and
- R3.18** are protected from behaviour that undermines their self-esteem, performance or professional confidence.

Pillar 4:

Educators and assessors

Standards

S4.1 Theory and practice learning and assessment are facilitated effectively and impartially by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals with necessary expertise for their educational roles.

Requirements

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must ensure that all educators and assessors:

- R4.1** meet the requirements set by the NMC⁹
- R4.2** act as professional role models at all times
- R4.3** receive relevant induction and access to ongoing training and support with consideration for equality legislation
- R4.4** have supported time and resources to enable them to fulfil their educational roles in addition to their other professional responsibilities
- R4.5** are effective and responsive to the diverse needs of students, sharing their own effective practice and learning from others
- R4.6** ensure a consistent approach to theory and practice learning and assessment by liaising and collaborating with colleagues and partner organisations
- R4.7** are supported to respond effectively to concerns about public protection and student performance in the learning environment
- R4.8** receive feedback from a diverse range of students and people about the effectiveness of their teaching, supervision and assessment, and
- R4.9** appropriately share and use evidence for decisions on student assessment and progression.

Pillar 5:

Curricula and assessment

Standards

- S5.1** Curricula and assessments are developed, implemented and reviewed to ensure that students achieve the learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies for their approved programme.

Requirements

Curricula

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must ensure that their curricula:

- R5.1** fulfil NMC programme requirements, providing learning opportunities that equip students to meet the NMC proficiencies
- R5.2** remain relevant in respect of the contemporary health and social care agenda
- R5.3** weigh theory and practice learning appropriately to the programme
- R5.4** are developed with input from sufficiently experienced and qualified educators and practitioners and informed by the views of key stakeholders, including service users, as relevant to the programme
- R5.5** provide appropriate structure and sequencing that integrates theory and practice at increasing levels of complexity, and
- R5.6** are structured and sequenced to enable students to manage their theory and practice learning experience effectively.

Assessment

Approved education institutions together with practice placement and work placed learning partners must ensure that:

- R5.7** assessment is fair, reliable and valid to enable students to demonstrate they have achieved the NMC proficiencies for their programme
- R5.8** students with disabilities are provided with reasonable adjustments in the assessment of both theory and practice, in accordance with relevant equality legislation
- R5.9** students are assessed across practice settings as required by their programme
- R5.10** assessment occurs periodically and is mapped to the curriculum and sequenced to match progression through the programme
- R5.11** practice assessment is facilitated and evidenced by direct and indirect observations and other appropriate methods
- R5.12** a range of service users contribute to the student assessment process
- R5.13** assessment of practice and theory is weighted appropriately to the programme
- R5.14** there is no compensation between the assessment of theory and practice learning
- R5.15** assessment is carried out by individuals with current knowledge and experience, who have been appropriately selected, prepared and supported for their role as assessor
- R5.16** assessment for progressing through a programme and confirmation of proficiency on completion of a programme must be carried out by academic and practice assessors who are registered nurses or midwives with current knowledge and expertise
- R5.17** academic and practice assessors work collaboratively, agreeing assessment for students progressing through a programme and confirmation of proficiency on completion of a programme
- R5.18** assessment, progression and decision making is informed by objective, accurate and transparent student records
- R5.19** any student learning and assessment which takes place outside the UK is supported by appropriate healthcare professionals and evidence, and
- R5.20** students receive objective feedback on their performance in theory and practice at appropriate points in their programme.

Glossary

- 1. Recognition of prior learning (RPL):** a process that enables previous certificated or experiential learning to be recognised and accepted as meeting some programme outcomes and requirements; this means it includes both theory and practice achievement.
- 2. Educators:** in the context of the NMC education framework educators are those who deliver, support, supervise and/or assess theory and/or practice and/or work placed learning.
- 3. Approved education institutions (AEIs):** This is the status awarded to an institution, or part of an institution, or combination of institutions that works in partnership with practice placement and work based learning providers. AEI's will have provided us with assurance that they are accountable and capable of delivering NMC approved education programmes.
- 4. Practice placement and work placed learning partners:** organisations who provide practice based learning and support necessary for meeting NMC standards of proficiency
- 5. Learning environments:** includes any environment in terms of physical location where learning takes place as well as the system of shared values, beliefs and behaviours within these places.
- 6. (Good) health and character requirements:** as stipulated in our legislation, Articles 9(2)(b) and 5(2)(b) of the Order, 'good health' means that the applicant is capable of safe and effective practice either with or without reasonable adjustments. It does not mean the absence of a health condition or disability. Each applicant seeking admission to the register or to renew registration, whether or not they have been registered before, is required to declare any pending charges, convictions, police cautions and determinations made by other regulatory bodies. [Visit our website for more information.](#)
- 7. Practice supervisors:** any registered health and social care professionals who support students with their practice learning.

8. **Practice assessor and academic assessor:** assess and confirm student achievement of learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies.
9. **Supported learning time:** all learners enrolled in an NMC approved education programme must have support and supervision that encourages learning. Their participation in theory, practice or simulation based learning should be based on their learning need and competence level and they should be supported to practice and learn without being interrupted for service provision.
10. **Reasonable adjustments:** the duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' in the learning environment is where a disabled student would otherwise be put at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled students.
11. **Resources:** in the context of the NMC education framework includes physical resources as well as human resources in theory and practice education.
12. **Quality assurance:** our process for making sure all AElS continue to meet our requirements and their approved education programmes comply with our standards.
13. **Service users:** all individuals or groups who receive services from nurses and midwives including patients, healthy individuals, parents, children, families, carers, representatives.
14. **Simulation:** an artificial representation of a real world practice scenario that supports student development through experiential learning with the opportunity for repetition, feedback, evaluation and reflection. Effective simulation facilitates patient safety by enhancing knowledge, behaviours and skills.
15. **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 the NMC education framework this includes students, educators, partner organisations, service users, carers, employers, other professionals, other regulators and education commissioners.
16. **Student:** any individual enrolled onto an NMC-approved programme at pre-registration or post-registration level, whether full time or less than full time.

End notes

1. www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/raising-concerns-guidance-for-nurses-and-midwives/
2. www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/the-professional-duty-of-candour/
3. Includes, but not limited to, relevant European Union legislation in relation to education and training
4. Standards of proficiency for registered nurses
5. Guidance for AEs on health and character
6. NMC Standards
7. Lead Midwife for Education (LME) for pre-registration midwifery education programmes
8. Please see Annexe 1
9. Annexe 1: Requirements for learning and assessment for all nursing and midwifery programmes

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