



# **Nursing and Midwifery Council Quality Assurance Review**

## **Major Modification Report for:**

**Pre-registration nursing associate qualification  
leading to:**

**Nursing Associate**

**Keele University**

**May 2025**

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## Key institutional and programme details

<b>Name and location of Approved Education Institution (AEI)</b>	Keele University Keele Newcastle ST5 5BG				
<b>AEI Institution Identifier [UKRPN]</b>	10007767				
<b>Name and location of programme delivery partner(s) if not the AEI noted above</b>	Telford College Haybridge Road Wellington Telford Shropshire TF1 2NP				
<b>Name of new employer partners for apprenticeships</b>	There are no new employer partners				
<b>Approval type</b>	Major modification				
<b>Name of programme</b>					
<b>NMC programme title</b>	<b>AEI programme title (in full)</b>	<b>Academic level(s)</b>	<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
<b>Nursing Associate</b>	FdSc Nursing Associate	England <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Nursing Associate</b>	FdSc Nursing Associate	England <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interim awards available</b> There are no interim awards for this qualification that lead to NMC registration					
<b>Proposed programme start date</b>	22 September 2025				
<b>Standard(s) under assessment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes  Note that the AEI has taken an institutional approach to Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment and therefore compliance with Part 2 has been confirmed through a previous review.				
<b>Date of visit</b>	13 May 2025				
<b>Visitor team</b>	Registrant Visitors: Mrs Theresa Critchlow Miss Julie Fletcher  Lay Visitor: Professor Liz Crolley				

## Executive summary

Quality Assurance Reviews (QARs) are undertaken for the specific purpose of making recommendations to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in relation to the approval (or otherwise) of the above-named programme(s) or in relation to the approval (or otherwise) of major modifications to the above-named programme(s). Reviews follow the Gateway approach to programme approvals and major modifications, as outlined in QAA Guidance for Approved Education Institutions and Education Institutions on NMC Quality Assurance Reviews.

Reviews involve a period of desk-based analysis with the opportunity for NMC visitors to request further information, evidence or clarification and a conjoint visit with the Approved Education Institution (AEI) or Education Institution (EI) programme approval panel. All evidence submitted by the AEI or EI is reviewed by the visitors.

Visits enable both the NMC visitors and the AEI or EI programme approval panel to gather further evidence and clarifications to inform their judgements and make recommendations about the AEI or EI ability to meet the NMC standards. Visits will normally include meetings with a range of stakeholders such as students, people who use services and carers, employers, practice learning partners, the programme team and senior managers.

For programme approvals all standards within Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes are reported upon. For major modifications only those Part 3 standards impacted by the modification are reported upon. The visitor team confirms with the AEI/EI which Part 3 standards are in scope for a major modification.

Following a review, a draft report is shared with the AEI/EI for the purposes of confirming factual accuracy before the report is finalised.

The conjoint visit with Keele University's approval panel took place on 13 May 2025.

### Context for the review

This major modification for Keele University (KU) relates to the proposed addition of a direct entry route for students to access the Nursing Associate programme (which would be an addition to the apprenticeship route currently being offered). The modification also includes the proposed addition of Telford College (TC) as a satellite site which will be used to deliver the Nursing Associate programmes in addition to delivery at KU. The delivery of the provision at TC will be by staff from KU and the arrangements for the programmes will be replicated to reflect those provided at KU. TC will provide campus-based resources such as learning and teaching spaces, and there will be arrangements for students/apprentices to access any initial support and then link with the processes at KU.

KU engaged with stakeholders including practice learning partners (PLPs)/employer partners (EPs), people who use services and carers (PSCs) and students/apprentices in the development of the proposals for the programme. There are close working relationships between KU and the current PLPs/EPs who will be involved in the proposed direct entry route for the Nursing Associate programme and who will also have apprentices who will be based at the proposed new satellite site. Consultation took place with all groups and an extensive document was produced which highlighted staff and PLP/EP consultation. PSCs attend the module development boards and have input to recruitment, usually via the co-production of interview questions, and they attend interviews when possible. There was a strong message from the PLPs/EPs regarding the need for a direct entry route to support the workforce required, and also to be delivered at the proposed satellite site, as this will assist students in travel ensuring a high level of student/apprentice experience.

As the Nursing Associate programme is currently running with apprentices, stakeholder influence has been around internal quality assurance, and the evaluation of modules has influenced ongoing development. PSCs and PLPs/EPs are members of the School of Nursing and Midwifery module review group, where they provide and listen to feedback. PSCs were consulted regarding the direct entry route and proposed satellite site, and this included the review of the programme specification. The Placement Summit was developed in partnership with PLPs/EPs to enable a review of, and planning for, practice learning allocations.

During the onsite visit, the visitor team met with members of the senior management and programme team, students on the existing apprenticeship route of the Nursing Associate programme and the Chair of the Student Staff Voice Committee, and representatives from PSCs, PLPs and EPs. PLP and EP representatives included those undertaking roles as practice supervisors (PSs), practice assessors (PAs), and practice education facilitators (PEFs).

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of KU's response to any conditions required by the approval panel, is as follows:

**Programme is recommended to the NMC for approval. The programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.**

The findings of the visitor team's review are explained in more detail in the following sections. This includes a summary of any conditions of approval and confirmation of whether these have been satisfactorily addressed.

## Conditions and recommendations

The **provisional judgement** of the visitor team following the visit and prior to the consideration of KU's response to any conditions was as follows:

**Programme is recommended to the NMC for approval after conditions are met to ensure the programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.**

### Conditions

Conditions				
No.	Condition details	Specific standard(s) not met	NMC only/ Joint	AEI only
C1	Ensure that the documented arrangements for the involvement of PSCs are appropriately updated and ratified.	2.1	Joint	
C2	Ensure there is documentation for students/apprentices based at the satellite site to clearly inform them of the support arrangements available.	2.1	NMC	
C3	The programme team must provide revised programme documentation including ensuring it aligns to the Keele Learning Principles and Assessment and Feedback Code of Practice relating to defined assessment terminology, and includes how students would raise concerns in placement.	N/A		AEI only
Date for all conditions to be met to meet intended delivery date		24 June 2025		

Joint conditions relate to both NMC standards and KU's programme approval outcomes. All conditions must be met for a programme to be recommended to the NMC for final approval.

### Recommendations for enhancement

Recommendations				
No.	Recommendation	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint	AEI only
R1	Review and update relevant documentation, including policies and student-facing information, to ensure their currency, and to include the arrangements for the Freedom to Speak Up process.	2.1, 2.2	NMC	
R2	Review staff and student-facing documentation, which references academic assessors and academic mentors, to maximise the clarity of the	2.2, 4.2	NMC	

	definition and explanation of these roles and how they are implemented in practice.			
R3	Clarity for the applicant to know what they are committing to in terms of the teaching schedule for the year (website needs to be updated to ensure it is clear).	N/A		AEI only
R4	Ensure there is clarity for applicants in terms of the finance they can access.	N/A		AEI only
R5	Consider how the School would ensure the comparable experience of a small cohort of students, for example one direct entry with the rest apprentices.	N/A		AEI only

Recommendations are to be addressed and reported in the annual self-assessment report.

## Statements of good practice

Statements of good practice relating to the NMC standards			
No.	Details	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint
GP1	The personalised approach to student/apprentice support to enable them to maximise their potential.	1.6, 3.3	NMC
GP2	The proactive approach to the relationship with practice learning/employer partners which enhances links between theory and practice.	3.2, 4.2	NMC

## Response to conditions

The visitor team reviewed in full the response(s) and evidence from KU to the conditions set. The findings of the visitor team with regard to responses to individual conditions are recorded below.

### Response to NMC and Joint NMC/AEI conditions

Response to conditions		
No.	Condition details	Findings
C1	Ensure that the documented arrangements for the involvement of PSCs are appropriately updated and ratified.	<p>In responding to Condition C1, KU initially submitted narrative and a link to the overarching <u>User and carer group</u> and <u>Patient and public involvement in research and knowledge mobilisation</u> website pages.</p> <p>An additional request was sent to KU for the updated policy documentation for PSCs. KU's Service User and Carer Strategy 2023-2026 was submitted and the visitor team confirmed the appropriateness of the content. However, the references to the dates and titles of the associated NMC documents lack consistent clarity and do not always reflect the latest published documents.</p> <p>The visitor team therefore considers that for Condition C1, KU has mainly addressed the requirements of the condition and Standard 2.1 is met due to the content of the documentation. However, there are inconsistencies</p>

		in the documentation to be resolved, specifically in relation to the referencing of NMC standards/ Standards of proficiency.
C2	Ensure there is documentation for students/apprentices based at the satellite site to clearly inform them of the support arrangements available.	<p>The Programme Handbook submitted in response to Condition C2 evidences the availability of information regarding support at the Telford site.</p> <p>The visitor team therefore considers that for Condition C2, KU has addressed the requirements of the condition and Standard 2.1 is met.</p>

The visitor team considers that all conditions listed above have been satisfactorily addressed resulting in the team being able to confirm that all required NMC standards are met.

### Response to AEI only conditions

The response to KU conditions that are not directly related to individual NMC standards are reported in the table below.

Response to AEI only conditions		
No.	Condition details	Findings
C3	The programme team must provide revised programme documentation including ensuring they align to the Keele Learning Principles and Assessment and Feedback Code of Practice relating to defined assessment terminology, and includes how students would raise concerns in placement.	<p>KU provided confirmation of approval of the Condition from the Chair of the panel via evidence of an email submitted on 24 June 2025.</p> <p>The visitor team considers that for Condition C3, KU has addressed the requirements of the condition and therefore Condition C3 is met.</p>

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor team to the NMC, following consideration of KU's response to any conditions set, is therefore as follows:

All conditions relating to this programme have been addressed and **the programme is recommended to the NMC for approval**. The programme meets all standards and requirements and enables students to achieve stated NMC standards of proficiency and learning outcomes for theory and practice.



## Explanation of findings for Part 3

### 1: Selection, admission and progression

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not Met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
1.1	<p>Confirm on entry to the programme that students:</p> <p>1.1.1 meet the entry criteria for the programme as set out by the AEI and are suitable for nursing associate practice</p> <p>1.1.2 demonstrate values in accordance with the Code</p> <p>1.1.3 have capability to learn behaviours in accordance with the Code</p> <p>1.1.4 have capability to develop numeracy skills required to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>1.1.5 can demonstrate proficiency in English language</p> <p>1.1.6 have capability in literacy to meet programme outcomes</p> <p>1.1.7 have capability for digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Ensure students' health and character are sufficient to enable safe and effective practice on entering the programme, throughout the programme and when submitting the supporting declaration of health and character in line with the NMC's health and character decision making guidance. This includes satisfactory occupational health assessment and criminal record checks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Ensure students are fully informed of the requirement to declare immediately any police charges, cautions, convictions or conditional discharges, or determinations that their fitness to practise is impaired made by other regulators, professional bodies and educational establishments, and ensure that any declarations are dealt with promptly, fairly and lawfully.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	Ensure that the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the educational programme or their designated registered nurse substitute or designated registered nursing associate substitute, are able to provide supporting declarations of health and character for students who have completed a pre-registration nursing associate programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	Permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the programme. This maximum limit of 50 percent does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	programmes who are currently a NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice.				
1.6	Support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Recognition of prior learning metrics

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) can be considered up to a maximum of 50% of the programme (though the maximum limit of 50% does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate programmes who are currently an NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice). Applicants seeking admission with RPL need to provide a portfolio of evidence that includes a transcript of academic and practice attainment, normally of at least 120 credits at Level 4.

## Findings

1. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the arrangements for selection, admission and progression for the nursing associate provision, including KU's admissions, staff disclosure and barring service (DBS), RPL policies, and the updated programme specification. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the onsite visit with key stakeholders including senior managers and the programme team, staff members at the proposed TC satellite site, and apprentices.
2. In considering Standard 1.1, the visitor team reviewed the evidence submitted and triangulated this as applicable during the onsite visit to confirm the impact of the proposed addition of a direct entry route to the nursing associate provision. The visitor team was assured that the existing arrangements, previously approved for the apprenticeship route, remain applicable for direct entry students. The updated programme specification and the Quality Assurance and Operational Framework provide further evidence of meeting this standard in relation to the proposed direct entry route. KU's Academic Skills Programme document provides an excellent plan to support the development of students' academic skills including literacy, and a mapping document shows how the e-learning software system is (and will be) used to support numeracy across the programme.
3. In considering Standard 1.2, the visitor team reviewed KU's admissions and staff DBS policies, along with the Foundation Degree Nursing Associate (FdSc Nursing Associate) DBS document and Occupational Health Process Flow Chart. All offers made to students admitted to the programme will be conditional subject to an occupational health assessment, enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references. A Fitness Certificate will be issued to the student as part of the Occupational Health assessment, outlining any additional adjustments required to support the student's learning. Students will also be required to complete an Annual Declaration of Good Health and Good Character Status. The process is summarised in the Occupational Health Process Flow Chart for the previously approved apprenticeship route and in the programme specification for the FdSc Nursing Associate, which refers to both apprentices and direct entry students. The arrangements for the previously approved apprenticeship route will be applied to the direct entry route, with the annual self-declaration form being sent to students for completion. This annual self-declaration process will continue to be monitored by administrative staff at KU who will escalate any matters to the academic mentor (AM) as required. At KU, the AM is described

in the Academic Assessor, Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor Handbook, as '...the same academic as the student's Academic assessor. Their primary purpose is to give the student advice and guidance relating to their educational journey and signpost to sources of specialist advice and support as required. All academic staff are only aligned to one Part of the programme to prevent allocation on consecutive years'. The documentary evidence, responses to requests for additional information and meetings at the onsite visit provided the visitor team with the assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place for the proposed direct entry route, in accordance with Standard 1.2.

4. In considering Standard 1.3, the visitor team reviewed applications and admissions documentation. Marketing information for the direct entry route will outline the requirements linked to Standard 1.3 to match that of the nursing provision, and in line with the process summarised in the Occupational Health Process Flow Chart. The visitor team confirmed that the processes regarding the annual self-declaration apply to this standard as per Standard 1.2. The Quality Assurance and Operational Framework and the programme specification both cover Standard 1.3 effectively, and compliance will be monitored by the AM with clear processes in place.
5. In considering Standard 1.4, the visitor team checked the applicability of the previously approved arrangements linked to the apprenticeship provision and were assured of the plans to implement these for the direct entry route.
6. In considering Standard 1.5, the visitor team reviewed the programme specification and KU's RPL Policy and Advanced Standing for FdSc Nursing Associate document. Recognition and formal credit for prior learning can be considered as part of the admissions process for the FdSc Nursing Associate programme. This is usually up to a maximum of 50% of the programme as outlined in the programme specification and the RPL Policy (2023), which also outlines the principles for the consideration of RPL. KU has a process for students to apply to have RPL considered, with appropriate evidence required to support any claim, via a portfolio of evidence in which learning outcomes are mapped as well as learning hours. The maximum limit of 50% does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing associate programmes who are currently an NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice.
7. In considering Standard 1.6, the visitor team reviewed programme and module specific information for the FdSc Nursing Associate. The Foundation Degree Nursing Associate programme specification provides information on how students will develop their abilities in numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes. Schemes of learning for numeracy and literacy show mapping of numeracy and literacy skills, and safe medicines is managed via the use of an e-learning software system. The study skills guide assures literacy and study skills support, and during the onsite visit the staff and current students on the apprenticeship route confirmed that staff reviewed the progress of apprentices on the e-learning software system, identified where support was needed to meet the assessment requirements, and provided one-to-one sessions and drop-ins which the apprentices stated were very helpful and supportive. The visitor team therefore identified the personalised approach to student/apprentice support to enable them to maximise their potential as a feature of **good practice (GP1)**, and this also links to Standard 3.3. The proposed arrangements for the delivery of the nursing associate provision at the TC satellite site follow KU's processes and the visitor team was assured that students/apprentices based there would also receive appropriate levels of support.

8. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that KU has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 1: Selection, admission and progression to enable the NMC standards to be met.

## 2: Curriculum

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not Met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
2.1	Ensure that programmes comply with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	Design and deliver a programme that supports students and provides an appropriate breadth of experience for a non-field specific nursing associate programme, across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	Set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates and programme outcomes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6	Ensure that the programme hours and programme length are:  2.6.1 sufficient to allow the students to be able to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates,  2.6.2 no less than 50 percent of the minimum programme hours required of nursing degree programmes  2.6.3 consonant with the award of a Foundation degree (typically 2 years).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7	Ensure the curriculum provides an equal balance of 50 percent theory and 50 percent practice learning using a range of learning and teaching strategies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.8	Ensure technology and simulation opportunities are used effectively and proportionately across the curriculum to support supervision, learning and assessment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.9	Ensure nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme meet the nursing associate requirements and nursing associate proficiencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Curriculum requirements

KU's proposed FdSc direct entry route meets the required minimum of 1,150 hours of theory and 1,150 hours of practice, totalling 2,300 overall over the two-year programme.

Theoretical hours across the two-year programme = 1,372.5 hours

Practice hours across the two-year programme = 1,275 hours

## Findings

9. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the curriculum proposals for the addition of a direct entry route to the nursing associate provision, including the validation document, and programme-specific information such as the course plan and handbook. The visitor team also reviewed information relating to the proposed use of the new satellite site, and triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the onsite visit with key stakeholders including senior managers and the programme team, staff members at the proposed TC satellite site, apprentices and representatives from PSCs, PLPs and EPs.
10. In considering Standard 2.1, the visitor team reviewed KU's validation document, FdSc course plan and calendar, and commitment statements for the direct entry route from existing PLPs/EPs. The visitor team also considered the involvement of PSCs in the programme development and the plans for their involvement in the proposed direct entry route and at the satellite site. The Validation contextual document provides a rationale for the programme, and the programme handbooks demonstrate student/apprentice support and the student/apprentice voice. PLPs/EPs are current partners of KU and committed to the provision of programmes at KU and TC. This commitment was evident at the onsite visit as all Trusts were represented by a number of colleagues, which demonstrated excellent partnership working. PSCs are included throughout the development and delivery of the nursing associate provision and have been involved in the proposed modifications. PSC representatives met at the onsite visit confirmed their inclusion in module evaluation boards and in the development of programme content but had not been involved in recruitment for the current provision. The programme team confirmed that PSCs were included in interviews as much as possible and where not possible they had been engaged in the writing of the interview questions. There was no evidence of training for PSCs; however, the policy linked to the arrangements for PSC involvement and support is currently being updated. The visitor team therefore identified a **condition (C1)** linked to Standard 2.1, that was shared with the AEI panel members, for KU to ensure that the documented arrangements for the involvement of PSCs are appropriately updated and ratified. Equity of experience regarding aspects such as support for students/apprentices to be based at the proposed satellite site was evident in the Quality Assurance and Operational Framework. However, further documentation for students/apprentices was not available to demonstrate the planned communication and application of these arrangements. The visitor team therefore identified a **condition (C2)**, also linked to Standard 2.1, for KU to ensure there is student/apprentice-facing information for students/apprentices based at the satellite site to clearly inform them of the support arrangements available. Overall, the visitor team was assured by information such as the programme specification; however, there are some outdated references within this document to the 2018 Standards of Proficiency for Nursing Associates, which have been replaced by the 2024 version. While the content has not changed between the 2018 and 2024 versions, the proposed changes to the programme and associated updating provides the opportunity for KU to revise any outdated references and ensure all of the key information is consistently documented. The visitor team therefore identified a **recommendation (R1)** linked to Standards 2.1 and 2.2, for KU to review and update relevant documentation, including policies and student-facing information, to ensure their currency, and to include the arrangements for the Freedom to Speak Up process.
11. In considering Standard 2.2, the visitor team reviewed documentation including the 2025-2026 Placement handbook, the 2025 handbook for AAs, PAs and PSs, the programme specification and programme handbooks, the Serious Placement Issues

Policy and meeting minutes. The visitor team was assured through the appropriate evidence, including details within the programme handbooks, that KU encourages students/apprentices to raise concerns, and both PLPs/EPs and current apprentice representatives confirmed they were aware of the processes. Freedom to Speak Up is included within the first module, and evidence of this was shown during the onsite visit, where the visitor team reviewed the related page on the virtual learning environment (VLE) and the associated presentation for apprentices. While there was an awareness of the Freedom to Speak Up arrangements for the nursing associate provision, the visitor team identified a **recommendation (R1)** linked to Standard 2.2 (and Standard 2.1), for KU to review and update relevant documentation, including policies and student-facing information, to ensure their currency, and to include the arrangements for the Freedom to Speak Up process. KU ensures there is appropriate guidance on the roles of the AA, PS and PA, and on the preparation and ongoing support and development for these roles. PS/PA training is clear, and arrangements are in line with the NMC's Standards for student supervision and assessment (SSSA). The programme handbook includes information relating to the academic mentoring and AA arrangements at KU. Documentation across the programme is not consistent regarding the AM/AA roles and requires clarity. For example, a glossary within the handbook for AAs, PSs and PAs describes the roles of the AA and also of the AM. However, the information suggests that the AM is the same academic as the AA, though not for consecutive parts of the programme. In part one of the nursing associate programmes, the AM and AA roles are fulfilled by the same person, but this changes in part two of the programmes to ensure SSSA compliance, and the two roles are completed by different people. Overall, while KU does provide information on the use of both AA and AM terminology, the visitor team proposed that this could be improved to provide greater clarity and therefore identified a **recommendation (R2)**, linked to Standards 2.2 and 4.2, for KU to review staff and student-facing documentation, which references AAs and AMs, to maximise the clarity of the definition and explanation of these roles and how they are implemented in practice.

12. In considering Standards 2.3-2.5, the visitor team reviewed the narrative and evidence submitted that reflected the application of the previously approved arrangements for programme content to the proposed direct entry route. The visitor team was assured of the appropriate application of arrangements for a direct entry route for the programme, in line with the NMC Standards of proficiency for nursing associates, that will provide an appropriate breadth of experience across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.
13. In considering Standard 2.6, the visitor team reviewed the updated programme specification, course plans and academic calendars. Documentary evidence confirms that this standard is met. For example, the Validation contextual document states the hours of theory and practice for the direct entry route, with 1,150 theory and 1,150 hours for practice, totalling 2,300 overall. The two-year programme allows direct entry students to be able to have free time on indicated weeks.
14. In considering Standard 2.7, the visitor team assessed evidence of the equal balance of 50% theory and 50% practice learning and a range of learning and teaching strategies. Evidence confirms this standard is met, and hours are balanced across theory and practice. Learning and teaching strategies have been previously approved for the apprenticeship route and these are replicated for the direct entry students who will be taught alongside the apprentices. Delivery arrangements were confirmed by the visitor team during meetings at the onsite visit. There are excess hours planned and these are used for making up time to ensure that the 1,150 hours of theory and

of practice are met by the end of the programme (this is inclusive of enabling a four-day week across much of the programme, to facilitate students' work/life balance).

15. In considering Standard 2.8, the visitor team reviewed the use of technology and simulation opportunities in the nursing associate provision with a focus on the use of the proposed satellite site and the direct entry route. Module information demonstrated that technology is used across the current programme with simulation opportunities included within the theory hours. KU makes effective use of technology, including an e-learning software system for drug calculations, and electronic exams in anatomy and physiology. The visitor team viewed the facilities at the proposed satellite site, where the simulation suites provide a range of high technology and simulation opportunities. There are a range of manikins available and resources reflect real-life practice. Information technology (IT) suites will be available for student use, along with a social care area and an area with beds. The simulation suites were well established and conducive to supporting students in meeting the required proficiencies.
16. Standard 2.9 is not applicable to this modification as KU does not offer nursing associate programmes which form part of an integrated programme.
17. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that KU has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 2: Curriculum to enable the NMC standards to be met subject to meeting **conditions (C1) and (C2)**.



### 3: Practice learning

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
3.1	Provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to develop and meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates to deliver safe and effective care to a diverse range of people across the lifespan and in a variety of settings.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of nursing associates to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	<p>Ensure that nursing associate students have protected learning time in line with one of the following two options:</p> <p>3.4.1 Option A: nursing associate students are supernumerary when they are learning in practice</p> <p>3.4.2 Option B: nursing associate students, via work-placed learning routes:</p> <p>3.4.2.1 are released for a minimum of 20 per cent of the programme for academic study</p> <p>3.4.2.2 are released for a minimum of 20 per cent of the programme time, which is assured protected learning time in external practice placements, enabling them to develop the breadth of experience required for a generic role, and</p> <p>3.4.2.3 for the remainder of the required programme hours, protected learning time must be assured.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Practice learning requirements

Option A will be used for students on the proposed direct entry route, and nursing associate students will therefore be supernumerary when they are learning in practice.

Practice hours

Protected learning time:

Part 1:

22.5 per week x 4 weeks = 90

15 hours per week x 37 weeks = 555

645 hours in total in practice

Part 2:

15 hours per week x 42 weeks = 630 hours in total practice

Total across the 2 years = 1,275 hours in practice.

Option B is currently used for the previously approved apprenticeship route.

## Findings

18. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the arrangements for practice learning linked to the addition of a direct entry route to the nursing associate provision, and the proposed satellite site. Documentation reviewed by the visitor team included the programme specification, programme and placement handbooks, guidance for AMs/AAs, the Academic Assessor, Practice Supervisor and Assessor Handbook (2025), and course and placement plans. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the onsite visit with key stakeholders including senior managers and the programme team, staff members at the proposed TC satellite site, apprentices and representatives from PSCs, PLPs and EPs.
19. In considering Standards 3.1 and 3.2, the visitor team reviewed KU's arrangements for ensuring that practice learning opportunities will allow students on the direct entry route to develop and meet the required Standards of proficiency, and provide appropriate experience for the nursing associate role, including meeting the holistic needs of people of all ages in a variety of settings. Course plans and the placement plan demonstrate the allocation of time to practice learning and the wide range of practice experiences. The requirement for students to experience different settings is also articulated within the Practice Placement Handbook 2025/26 - FdSc Nursing Associate students. During the onsite visit, PLPs/EPs and the programme team confirmed their involvement in a Placement Summit, to support the planning of practice learning allocations and ensure the student journey is broad, and includes meeting diverse needs across the lifespan. In addition to the Placement Summit, the PLPs and EPs confirmed the implementation of specific drop-in sessions for the PS and PA which were regarded as useful and supportive. PLPs/EPs were also involved in the Module Evaluation Boards and received feedback following the Student Voice Committees. Apprentices on the current programme confirmed they have received a variety of appropriate practice learning placement experiences in accordance with the nursing associate role. The visitor team recognised the positive impact of the collaborative approach between KU and the PLPs/EPs in providing appropriate experiences for nursing associate apprentices. The visitor team therefore identified KU's proactive approach to the relationship with PLPs/EPs which enhances links between theory and practice as a feature of **good practice (GP2)** linked to Standard 3.2 (and 4.2).
20. In considering Standard 3.3, the visitor team reviewed KU's approach to supporting students'/apprentices' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating practice learning opportunities, and how this is implemented. KU's FdSc NA Placement Handbook provides evidence that individual circumstances will be considered prior to the allocation of practice learning opportunities for direct entry students. There is a change of placement request process in place to support individual needs further if required. The FdSc NA Placement Handbook and Academic Mentor Guidance highlight the role of the Occupational Health Department, who work with the School of Nursing and Midwifery 'to support students who have reasonable adjustments in place for clinical placements'. During the onsite visit, apprentices confirmed they knew of the reasonable adjustments process and the change of placement process. There was also a positive example of the support provided by an AM in response to difficulties in practice. The School of Nursing and Midwifery's Disability Inclusion Team (DIT) can also assist with placement-related issues if required and provide support for students/apprentices with physical health-related disabilities, with an example provided of the Team helping a student with resources in clinical practice. The main remit of DIT is, however, to signpost support services at KU, help to ensure that any agreed reasonable adjustments are in place

to support students/apprentices with academic work, and to liaise with module leaders and AMs. The BSc Nursing Registered Nurse Apprenticeship and FdSc Nursing Associate DBS and Occupational Health Process Flow Chart outline the process for reporting reasonable adjustments to employers and academic departments. Progress review (tripartite) meetings with the student/apprentice, PLP/EP and the AA/AM provide an opportunity for any additional needs identified in the initial assessments to be considered, and for KU and the PLPs/EPs to make any support arrangements. KU makes use of an onboarding software system to record the outcomes of initial assessments and additional updates regarding the support in place. Overall, KU demonstrated a thorough approach to supporting current apprentices, and the visitor team therefore identified KU's personalised approach to student/apprentice support as a feature of **good practice (GP1)**, as previously outlined in relation to Standard 1.6. The visitor team was assured of the arrangements in place to extend the support to the allocation of practice learning placements for direct entry students.

21. In considering Standard 3.4, the visitor team checked on the proposed options for protected learning time for nursing associate students on the direct entry route. Programme information confirms that Option A will be used for students on the proposed direct entry route, and nursing associate students will therefore be supernumerary when they are learning in practice. This information will be communicated to students through documentation such as the programme specification and handbook.
22. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that KU has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 3: Practice learning to enable the NMC standards to be met.

## 4: Supervision and assessment

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
4.1	Ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Ensure that support, supervision, learning and assessment provided complies with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Ensure they inform the NMC of the name of the registered nurse or registered nursing associate responsible for directing the education programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Provide students with constructive feedback throughout the programme to support their development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Ensure throughout the programme that students meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6	Ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing associate proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100%.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7	Assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8	Ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.9	Ensure that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills as set out in Standards of proficiency for nursing associates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Findings

23. The visitor team considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the arrangements for supervision and assessment linked to the addition of a direct entry route to the nursing associate provision, and the proposed satellite site. Documentation reviewed by the visitor team included programme and placement handbooks, information for AAs, PSs and PAs and external examiner reports. The visitor team also triangulated documentary evidence through meetings at the onsite visit with key stakeholders including senior managers and the programme team, staff members at the proposed TC satellite site, apprentices and representatives from PSCs, PLPs and EPs.
24. In considering Standards 4.1 and 4.2, the visitor team reviewed the additional/ updated documentation submitted in relation to the proposed addition of a direct entry route for nursing associate students (building on the previously approved apprenticeship route). KU's updated programme and placement handbooks, and the information for AAs/AMs and for AAs/PSs and PAs provided the visitor team with assurance of these standards being met in relation to the proposed direct entry route.

KU's assessment mapping and the programme specification evidence the mapping of the required Standards of proficiency to the programme. Partnership meetings and Placement Summits support the review of capacity and the monitoring of allocations for practice learning. KU holds monthly drop-in sessions for PSs/PAs to support their ongoing development, and these arrangements were confirmed by PLPs/EPs during the onsite visit. The onsite visit meeting with PLPs/EPs included representatives from the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Chief Nurses, Education Leads and PSs/PAs, who all spoke highly of KU's proactive approach to partnership working, including the Placement Summit and drop-in sessions for PSs/PAs. Senior representatives were also included in the strategic and operational planning meetings. The visitor team therefore identified KU's proactive approach to the relationship with PLPs/EPs as a feature of **good practice (GP2)** as outlined in full in relation to Standard 3.2.

25. KU noted that there was no change to the arrangements for Standard 4.3, and this was agreed by the visitor team. Standard 4.3 was therefore not applicable to this review.
26. In considering Standard 4.4, the visitor team reviewed the arrangements for ensuring that students on the proposed direct entry route will be provided with constructive feedback throughout the programme. KU will apply the same approaches to the provision of feedback for direct entry students, as for the current apprentices. There is evidence of initial screening being used to commence academic student support, and programme documentation refers to feedback being provided for both academic and practice learning. Module feedback for the current provision indicates that apprentices receive high quality and effective feedback. External examiner reports also confirm that feedback for the current provision is supportive. Current apprentices receive feedback at various stages in practice via the Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation (PARE) document, including multidisciplinary team (MDT) information and the record of communication. The visitor team triangulated the processes for giving feedback with current apprentices during the onsite visit. Apprentices confirmed that they received effective feedback in practice, informally and also via the PARE document. The visitor team was therefore assured of the current arrangements in place and the applicability of these to the proposed direct entry route.
27. In considering Standard 4.5, the visitor team reviewed documentation to ascertain that students on the proposed direct entry route will be required to meet the Standards of proficiency for nursing associates. The mapping of the programme to the required Standards of proficiency has been approved previously for the apprenticeship route. KU has provided updated programme documentation to further support the arrangements for this standard in relation to the proposed direct entry route and with consideration of the new satellite site. The visitor team was assured of the oversight of the arrangements by the Keele-Telford Quality Assurance and Operational Framework (2025-26). The FdSc Nursing Associate External Examiner visit report (06 2023) highlights positive aspects of practice learning with apprentices having a wide variety of opportunity and being able to progress effectively. During the onsite visit, key stakeholders including current apprentices and the programme team confirmed that apprentices meet the required Standards of proficiency and that support will be in place for future direct entry students, and those who will be based at the new satellite site.
28. In considering Standards 4.6 and 4.7, the visitor team considered the applicability of the previously approved processes to the proposed direct entry route. KU's arrangements for the health numeracy assessment and assessment of apprentices to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a nursing associate

will be mirrored by the arrangements for students on the direct entry routes and this is reflected in updated programme information.

29. In considering Standard 4.8, the visitor team reviewed programme documentation to confirm that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice for the proposed direct entry route. The programme specification highlights that 'The programme should be of 45 weeks duration per year with a minimum total of 2,300 hours over the duration over the two-year programme, demonstrating 50% theory and 50% practice hours'.
30. In considering Standard 4.9, the visitor team confirmed that the same practice assessment document and associated arrangements previously approved for the apprenticeship route will be appropriately applied to the proposed direct entry route for the nursing associate provision.
31. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that KU has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 4: Supervision and assessment to enable the NMC standards to be met.

## 5: Qualification to be awarded

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:		Met	Not met	Met after conditions	Not applicable to this major modification
5.1	Ensure that the minimum award for a nursing associate programme is a Foundation Degree of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (England), which is typically two years in length.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Notify students during the programme that they have five years in which to register their award with the NMC. In the event of a student failing to register their qualification within five years they will have to undertake additional education and training or gain such experience as is specified in our standards to register their award.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Findings

32. The visitor team considered documentary evidence linked to the qualification to be awarded, specifically in relation to the proposed addition of a direct entry route.
33. In considering Standards 5.1 and 5.2, the visitor team reviewed the updated programme information which includes details relating to the direct entry foundation degree qualification, in addition to the apprenticeship route. The programme specification and handbooks show that the proposed direct entry route mirrors the arrangements for the apprenticeship and is due to be delivered over two years. KU identified that the award title will remain the same for the direct entry students. The proposal is that the route of entry (apprenticeship or direct-entry) will not be reflected in the award title. As with the apprenticeship route, direct entry students will be notified that they must register with the NMC within five years of successful completion of their studies.
34. Based on the information made available, the visitor team considers that KU has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 5: Qualification to be awarded to enable the NMC standards to be met.

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