



Nursing and Midwifery Council Quality Assurance Review

Major Modification Report for:

Pre-registration nurse qualification leading to:

Pre-registration nursing – Adult

Pre-registration nursing – Mental Health

University of Essex

November 2024

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Key institutional and programme details

Name and location of Approved Education Institution (AEI)	University of Essex Wivenhoe Park Colchester Essex CO4 3SQ England			
AEI/EI Institution Identifier (UKPRN)	10007791			
Name and location of programme delivery partner(s) if not the AEI noted above	Not applicable			
Name of employer partners for apprenticeships	Not applicable			
Approval type	Major modification			
Name of programme				
NMC programme title	AEI/EI programme title (in full)	Academic level(s)	Full-time	Part-time
Pre-registration nursing - Adult	BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing	England, Wales, Northern Ireland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-registration nursing - Mental Health	BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing	England, Wales, Northern Ireland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard(s) under assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Part 2: Standards for student supervision and assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes			
Proposed programme start date	31 January 2025			
Date of visit	October 2024 - desk based			
Visitor team	Registrant Visitor: Professor Karen McCutcheon			

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. 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. All evidence submitted by the AEI is reviewed by the visitors.

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

The desk-based review of the AEI took place during October 2024.

Context for the review

The University of Essex (UoE) is requesting this major modification to its BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing and its BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing programmes, with a view to introducing simulated practice learning (SPL) from the end of January 2025. UoE initially identified that this modification would only impact Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes 2.10 and 3.4. During the review of the modification, further standards were brought into scope to ensure that SPL aligned with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment. UoE confirms that the request will not require any further changes to the existing programme, and the visitor also confirmed this to be the case.

The **final recommendation** made by the visitor to the NMC 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 NMC visitor's review are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Conditions and recommendations

Conditions

Conditions				
No.	Condition details	Specific standard not met	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only
C1	None			

Recommendations for enhancement

Recommendations				
No.	Recommendation	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint	AEI/EI only
R1	None			

Statements of good practice

Statements of good practice relating to the NMC standards			
No.	Details	Specific standard(s)	NMC only/ Joint
GP1	None		

Explanation of findings for Part 3

Standard 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 their intended field of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing</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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4	Ensure the registered nurse responsible for directing the educational programme or their designated registered nurse substitute is able to provide supporting declarations of health and character for students who have completed a pre-registration nursing programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.5	Permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes, up to a maximum of 50% of the programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.6	For NMC registered nurses, permit recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	programme outcomes that may be more than 50% of the programme.				
1.7	Support students throughout the programme in continuously developing their abilities in numeracy, literacy and digital and technological literacy to meet programme outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Recognition of prior learning metrics

Not in scope for this modification

Findings

1. Arrangements for selection, admission and progression for programmes have not changed as a result of the modification and therefore this standard was not considered.

Standard 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Comply with the NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Ensure that programme learning outcomes reflect the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and each of the four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.4	Design and deliver a programme that supports students and provides exposure across all four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.5	State routes within their pre-registration nursing programme that allows students to enter the register in one or more of the specific fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities or children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.6	Set out the general and professional content necessary to meet the Standards of proficiency for registered nurses and programme outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.7	Set out the content necessary to meet the programme outcomes for each field of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.8	Ensure that field-specific content in relation to the law, safeguarding, consent, pharmacology and medicines administration and optimisation is included for entry to the register in one or more fields of nursing practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.9	Ensure the curriculum provides an equal balance of 50% theory and 50% practice learning using a range of learning and teaching strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.10	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"/>
2.11	Ensure that programmes delivered in Wales comply with legislation which supports use of the Welsh language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.12	Ensure that all pre-registration nursing programmes meet the equivalent of minimum length of three (academic) years for full time programmes, which consist of a minimum of 4,600 hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.13	Ensure programmes leading to registration in two fields of nursing practice are of suitable length to ensure proficiency in both fields of nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.14	Ensure programmes leading to nursing registration and registration in another profession are of suitable length and nursing proficiencies and outcomes are achieved in a nursing context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Curriculum requirements

Not applicable for this modification

Findings

2. In considering Standard 2.10, the visitor considered a range of evidence for this standard including the simulated practice learning document, the simulated practice learning tracker, the placement map, register of practice assessors and practice supervisors, the gap analysis, reasonable adjustments procedure and the Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor Handbook for simulated practice learning (SPL).
3. UoE provides details as to how SPL will be integrated into the existing curriculum effectively and proportionately, and confirms the investment in expanded simulation suites, equipment and simulation technologies to support this change. The visitor has seen evidence from meetings that senior management has been engaged in and supportive of this curriculum change in the Business Case and HSC Nursing Periodic Review Report. The visitor has also confirmed from the meetings and sessions - simulation record and the simulated placement NMC modification document - that academic and placement staff have been appropriately trained in simulation and simulated learning and that the training includes the use of recognised best practice guidelines, clear scenarios, and learning outcomes linked to the students' programme of study. The visitor also noted clear evidence in the simulated placement NMC modification document that this change to practice learning has been developed with engagement from practice learning partners.
4. There are evaluations from students and evidence of communication and involvement in decision making regarding SPL. This provides assurance to the visitor that students have been consulted and there has been open and transparent engagement regarding the curriculum change.
5. While it is acknowledged by UoE that not every student will receive the same number of simulated practice learning hours, the use of student feedback and preference choice will be given careful consideration to enable the allocation of an appropriate and proportionate experience. The visitor confirmed that arrangements are in place to ensure that the type of allocation will be carefully managed and considered as SPL develops to ensure fairness and equity across cohorts.
6. Based on the information made available, the visitor considers that UoE has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 2: Curriculum to enable the NMC standards to be met.

Standard 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 registered nurses to deliver safe and effective care to a diverse range of people across the four fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Ensure that students experience the variety of practice expected of registered nurses to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Provide practice learning opportunities that allow students to meet the communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures, as set out in Standards of proficiency for registered nurses, within their selected fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.4	Provide no less than 2,300 practice learning hours, of which a maximum of 600 hours can be in simulated practice learning.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Take account of students' individual needs and personal circumstances when allocating their practice learning including making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Ensure students experience the range of hours expected of registered nurses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.7	Ensure that students are supernumerary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Practice learning requirements and simulated learning hours

The curriculum provides for 2,360 hours of practice-based learning (59 weeks at 40 hours per week), as well as up to 440 hours of retrieval placements available over the summer period in years two and three in case of concerns regarding achievement of outcomes. A maximum of 400 hours of simulated practice learning placement (SPLP) is being introduced into the BSc Nursing Adult and BSc Nursing Mental Health programmes from the 2025-26 academic year to count within students' practice learning hours. Nursing students will be offered a maximum of two SPLPs across the programme which would total 400 hours of simulated practice learning (200 hours for each simulated practice placement).

Findings

7. In considering Standard 3.4, the visitor reviewed a range of evidence for this standard notably including the clinical placement map and timetable, simulated practice learning hours tracker, simulated learning practice handbook and reasonable adjustments procedures.
8. The evidence provided by UoE provides robust assurance of the integration of SPL into the students' clinical practice learning placement. This includes evidence of governance in place to monitor the number of student practice hours undertaken via SPL to ensure that this does not exceed 400 hours. The total hours of practice learning exceed the minimum requirement of 2,300.
9. The handbook provides clarity in the roles of practice supervisors and practice assessors and their training, and the visitor confirmed a student/staff ratio of between 5:1 and 7:1 for each practice supervisor. Governance procedures reviewed by the visitor are appropriate as these include measures to avoid the academic assessor also taking on the role of practice supervisor for the same student.
10. The visitor identified that UoE plans to operate these arrangements as a 40-hour full-time week with hours allocated in a similar way to other clinical practice placement experiences. The timetable provides evidence of a typical week of SPL which includes associated hours. The example timetable provided by the UoE shows a breakdown of a week of SPL and how activities are structured to develop proficiency through simulation, including the use of software packages, engaging in care and reflection. Through analysis of the documentary evidence provided the visitor confirmed that appropriate arrangements are in place for practice supervisors and assessors to verify practice hours on timesheets included in the students' ePAD.
11. The visitor concluded that the development of this intended SPL has been well presented, and the design/approach taken has the potential to augment clinical learning and help bridge the theory/practice gap. Based on the information made available, the visitor considers that UoE has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 3: Practice learning to enable the NMC standards to be met.

Standard 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 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 registered nurses and programme outcomes for their fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.6	Ensure that all programmes include a health numeracy assessment related to nursing proficiencies and calculation of medicines which must be passed with a score of 100%.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.7	Ensure that students meet all communication and relationship management skills and nursing procedures within their fields of nursing practice: adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.8	Assess students to confirm proficiency in preparation for professional practice as a registered nurse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.9	Ensure that there is equal weighting in the assessment of theory and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.10	Ensure that all proficiencies are recorded in an ongoing record of achievement which must demonstrate the achievement of proficiencies and skills set out in standards of proficiency for registered nurses.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

12. The visitor considered a range of documentary evidence relating to the supervision and assessment of SPL including practice assessor and practice supervisor handbooks, SPL narrative and relevant policies and procedures.
13. In relation to Standard 4.1 the visitor identified that there was robust evidence assuring compliance with the NMC standards framework for nursing and midwifery education. The evidence provided indicated there has been investment in simulation resources and software, appropriate staffing resource is in place, and relevant training has been provided to staff on the implementation of simulated practice learning. Through documentary analysis the visitor confirmed that there is evidence of strong engagement with practice learning partners during the implementation of SPL. This engagement is evidenced through meeting minutes which capture the

involvement of practice learning partners, student representatives and field-specific leads in the development of SPL.

14. In considering Standard 4.2 the visitor confirmed that the support, supervision, learning and assessment of the UoE SPL provision complies with the NMC standards for student supervision and assessment. Through documentary analysis the visitor confirmed that practice assessors are not simultaneously the practice supervisor and academic assessor for the same student. The visitor confirmed that the ratio of practice supervisors and practice assessors ensures there is appropriate support and oversight of practice supervision to ensure safe and effective learning. The requirements for student supervision and assessment during SPL are clearly outlined in the practice assessor and practice supervisor handbook created specifically for guidance in relation to SPL. This document clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of practice assessors and practice supervisors in terms of appropriate supervision and assessment of students during SPL.
15. The visitor identified the UoE's simulation plan details that the practice assessor will continue with the student from their clinical practice learning setting into the SPL setting, with communication with practice supervisors capture via the practice assessment document.
16. The visitor reviewed evidence that confirms that the SPL is designed and delivered in accordance with the students' stage of learning on the programme, confirming that the learning experience is tailored to the stage of learning, proficiencies and programme outcomes. SPL activities are designed to widen learning opportunities and exposures to proficiencies that students may have difficulty accessing in the practice setting, for example end-of-life care. The initial roll-out of SPL will focus on mental health nursing students in Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme. The SPL focuses on specific learning outcomes identified through a GAP analysis of Part 2 and Part 3 proficiencies for mental health nursing students.
17. The visitor confirmed that within the provision of SPL, students will continue to be supervised and assessed by registered nurses from the students' field of nursing practice thus ensuring the expectation of the NMC standards for student supervision and assessment.
18. In considering Standard 4.4 the visitor confirmed that appropriate processes are in place to provide constructive and timely feedback within SPL to support students' development, which includes the use of debriefs. The visitor reviewed evidence identifying that UoE's simulation strategy outlines that SPL is based on key educational theories underpinning simulation, and includes appropriate frameworks for debriefing to give feedback. Documentary evidence also confirms that the practice assessment document is utilised to capture all SPL activities and assessments.
19. In considering Standard 4.7 the visitor confirmed that the evidence supplied indicates that SPL is included in the field-specific placement mapping. The example mapping shows how field-specific practice placements are allocated across the placement circuit in a range of settings and includes SPL as part of this placement circuit. The mapping document sets out that students will be allocated to a maximum of two simulated placements totalling 200 hours per placement.
20. In considering Standard 4.10 the visitor confirmed through documentary evidence that the practice assessment document is used to record SPL. This includes assessments, skills and proficiencies aligned to the standards of proficiency. Weekly activity is aligned to the practice assessment document. SPL will be designed with

specific learning outcomes that address proficiencies identified in UoE's GAP analysis, which highlighted difficulties in mental health nursing students achieving certain proficiencies in Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme.

21. The visitor considers that UoE has in place the appropriate arrangements for Standard 4: Supervision and assessment to enable the NMC standards to be met.

Standard 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 pre-registration nursing programme is a bachelor's degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Notify students during and before completion of the programme that they have five years 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 specified in our standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

22. Arrangements for the award of qualifications for programmes have not changed as a result of the modification and therefore this standard was not considered.

QAA2891 – R14799 – March 25

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